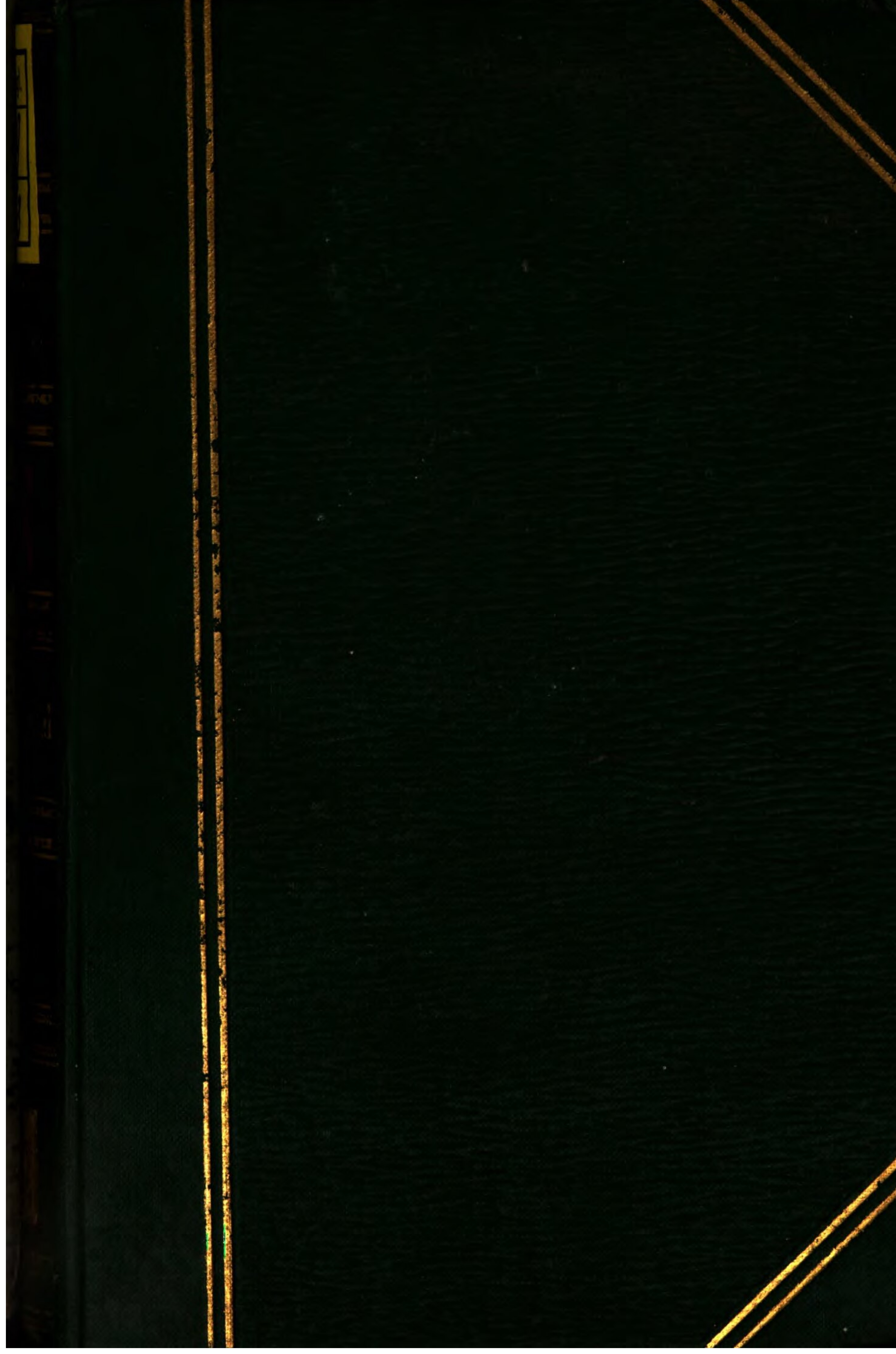




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Hollingshead

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WAYS OF LIFE

BY

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD,

AUTHOR OF "UNDER BOW BELLS," "ODD JOURNEYS," ETC. ETC.

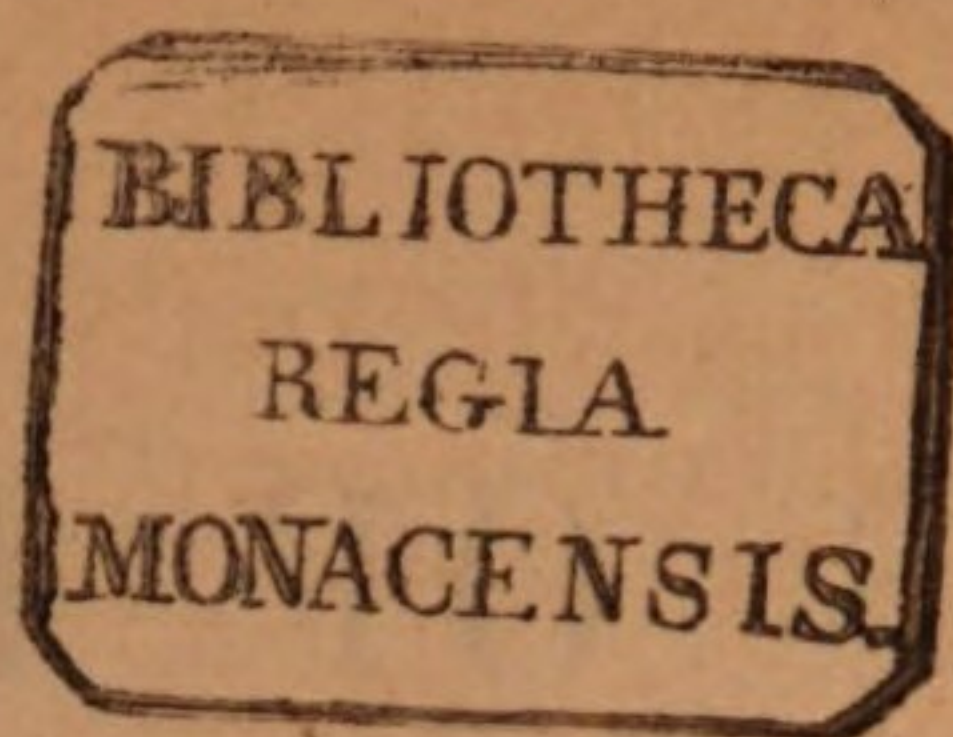


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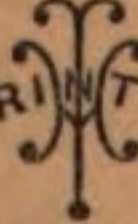
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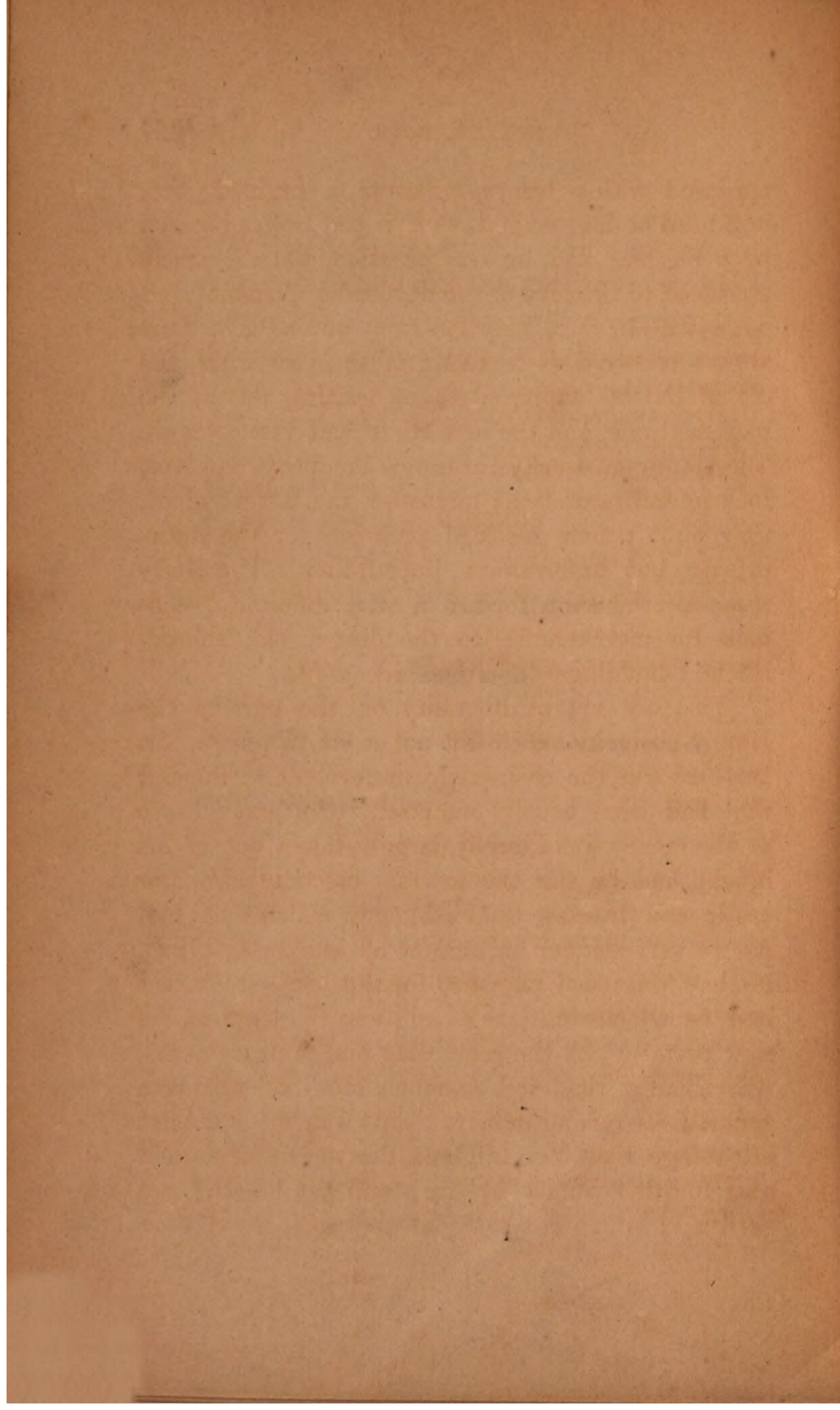
T. HARRILD, TER, SHOE LANE,
FLEET STREET.

TO
SAMUEL SMILES, ESQ.,

This Book

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY HIS FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



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[The papers which come together in this volume, in four divisions, under the general heading of "Ways of Life," have been several years growing into a book. With a few exceptions, acknowledged in foot-notes, they first appeared in "HOUSEHOLD WORDS," and "ALL THE YEAR ROUND."]

ECCENTRIC WAYS.

B

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WAYS OF LIFE.



A GIPSY KING.

THE greatest weakness that poor aunt had, was a passion for adoption, and irregular servants. To begin, she adopted me—her niece. Our boy, who was page and waiter at table, was a transported burglar's orphan. Our two maid-servants were work-house castaways. Our late coachman and general man-servant was a ticket-of-leave holder, who did not turn out well; and, at last, we adopted in his place a gipsy king. Aunt—or Miss Granite, as I ought to call her—was a maiden lady between fifty and sixty, possessed of considerable property, great strength of character, and unflinching moral courage. This was her very sensible, though somewhat eccentric idea of practical charity. Perhaps she was right; for, as a whole, her system worked well. She rose superior to the opinion of her neighbours, although we lived in a small, dull village, about fifteen miles on the highroad from London to Dover; and our villa, being next door to the rural station-house, the majesty of the law,

if required, could have been turned on at any moment.

The ticket-of-leave man had a brother in the village, who, in my opinion, was no better than the convict, only he had never been found out; and this brother, feeling ashamed of his relative's presence, was always urging him privately to go to Australia. This unceasing family pressure at last had its effect; and, one night, he disappeared, taking enough of Miss Granite's loose cash with him to defray the cost of his passage.

It was getting late in the autumn; the weather was cold and chilly; the trees were standing under bare branches; the soil round the town was of a clayey nature; there had been much rain for many weeks, and the mists were damp and dispiriting. About the middle of a very dismal day at this period, a dirty, ragged man, of the tramp species, was observed to walk to and fro for some little time, in the hope of attracting the attention of the inmates; but, as no one went to the gate, he at last ventured to ring the bell. Miss Granite was looking through the drawing-room window, and at once made amends for her neglect, by ordering the unpromising stranger to be invited in. Although he had looked dirty, unprepossessing, and half-wild outside the house, when he entered our presence his appearance was infinitely worse. His clothes were patched with rags, like a bed-quilt, and the patches were again re-patched with clay. His face was sharp, brown, and grizzly; and his hands were

nearly the colour of treacle. His object was to solicit the place left vacant by the absconded ticket-of-leave man.

"Where have you lived before?" asked my aunt. The visitor was silent.

"I don't care where it was," continued my aunt, "so long as I know the truth: I'm above all vulgar prejudices."

"Well, mum," he said, slowly, "I 'avn't lived anywheres to speak on, except in the woods. I'm a gipsy king."

"A what?" exclaimed Miss Granite, in astonishment.

"A gipsy king, mum," returned the stranger, timidly, "an' a werry 'ard life it is, mum!"

My aunt for some few minutes remained silent. The stranger waited for her to take up the conversation, and I felt very much disposed to laugh.

"Is it possible," said Miss Granite, "that one of your ancient, wandering race can think of settling down in the homes of civilization?"

"Yes, mum," replied the gipsy king, "that's hexactly what it is."

"You are sincere," asked Miss Granite, "in your desire to forsake your tribe?"

"They didn't do the thing as was right by me," said the gipsy king, evasively; "they took a husurper; let 'em keep 'im."

"You have no wish to be any longer considered a king?" asked Miss Granite, with some tone of respect in her voice.

"Gipsy kings, mum, is all werry well to talk about over a fire," he answered, "an' all werry well to sing about over a pianner," he added, turning to me; "but let 'em try it in the winter, that's all!"

This last answer seemed satisfactory to aunt, and it explained to me pretty clearly the motives that had governed the stranger's application for the place. The weather was quite severe enough to drive every tribe of real or professed gipsies into comfortable winter quarters, except those who were content to be petrified with rheumatism and chilblains.

The gipsy king retired to the apartment of his predecessor, the late ticket-of-leave man, and in the course of an hour he acquired the appearance of another individual. Two buckets of water, several cakes of soap, and the half-livery of the last servant (the best suit he had left behind him), turned the gipsy king into a very presentable groom—even for a village.

"What name shall we call you by?" asked Miss Granite, when he came into the sitting-room for orders.

"Well, mum," he replied, "if it's all the same to you, I should like to drop my real name, which no one could make anythin' of, an' answer to the call of Sam."

"We shall call you Samuel," said Miss Granite, with some dignity, "we have no nicknames here."

My own impression is, that the gipsy king would,

if properly treated, have sunk in time into a steady, common-place servant. The influence of regular habits and regular meals was beginning to tell upon his frame, and while he lost his hungry sharpness of face, he acquired a very respectable roundness of body. The proverbial restlessness and activity of his race was certainly becoming faded in him, for no one of the small kitchen household was so often found asleep before the fire. He was spoiled by his fellow-servants. They told him wonderful stories of his people that he had never heard before, and they sang unto him the wild songs of his native tribes (as published by the music-sellers). They read to him (for he could not read himself) a cheap penny history of Bampfylde Moore Carew; and though he openly called the wandering gentleman an idiot and a fool, the poison sank into his soul. They would not let him alone; but taught him cheerful ballads of a gipsy's life, until his not very powerful mind began to give way, and he passed much of his time in dreaming of the lost poetry of the woods and fields.

He was a tolerably steady man, but a very unsteady coachman. His knowledge of wild horses might have been very great—as great as he said it was—but for the first two months he could scarcely turn our old mare, Nancy, in the road, and he was quite unequal to backing her up a heavy lane. Miss Granite seemed perfectly satisfied with him, and therefore no one else could complain; and she always treated him with much ceremony, in con-

sideration of the title he had given up on entering her service.

The winter, which was a very severe one, passed by, and the spring came in very warm and early. About the middle of March we were sitting with open windows ; the grass was rich and full, and the birds were singing in the trees that were prematurely covered with leaves. The songs which the gipsy king had learnt of the servants he sang more loudly and more frequently about the house and stable-yard ; and for the last two months he had claimed his periodical holidays, and had spent them, as far as I could learn, in wandering about the country.

Miss Granite had a custom of going to London twice a year—early in April and early in October—to see her stockbroker, and transact a little city business. I never knew what she did on these occasions, my duty being simply to accompany her in the carriage, to wait until she was ready to return, to dine with her at a particular pastrycook's, and afterwards to ride with her home. The coachman had always half-a-crown given him, and permission to spend it at a particularly old tavern near the Bank of England.

Of course these visits to the metropolis were always made in our own carriage, as it was exactly at that period when coaches had ceased to run, and railways had not yet thoroughly taken their place.

The vehicle was brought to our door about ten o'clock in the morning, and we drove leisurely to

the city (not to distress the horses), arriving there about half-past one. At five o'clock—allowing time for rest and baiting—we again took our seats, and got home between eight and nine to tea or supper. This is precisely what we had done, to my knowledge, eighteen times during the last nine years, and this is what Miss Granite, in the early part of the April of which I am writing, prepared to do again.

Our coach was old-fashioned, but comfortable; a yellow chariot that would have held six upon an emergency, but which (except when Miss Granite placed it at the disposal of a children's party) never held but our two selves. Miss Granite used to sit by herself on the broad cushion facing the driver, as she could not ride with her back to the horses; and I used to sit opposite, as she always liked plenty of room. The two horses were bony and majestic, and we never knew what their full speed was, as it had never been tried. The mare, Nancy, was rather restive, but the other horse was easily managed.

This was the equipage with which, on a bright spring morning, like a summer's morning, we started for London, the gipsy king being elevated upon his novel throne, the coach-box. He had driven us before about the country, with more or less skill, but this was his first metropolitan journey. I had my misgivings, but it was useless to express them.

We went on very well, even down Shooter's Hill,

until we got into the busy part of the Old Kent Road; and there I noticed the wheels of heavy waggons very close to our windows, and we received several severe bumps. When we reached the Borough, these signs of bad coachmanship became more frequent; and we heard the sounds of loud, angry, and laughing voices, the slashing of whips across the top of our chariot, and saw the meaning gestures of many omnibus-drivers and hackney-cabmen. The passage of London Bridge and King William Street was an agony of terror to me, though aunt seemed to bear it all very calmly. At length we drew up at our destination, the gipsy king received his half-a-crown and his instructions, and we went about our business.

Punctually at our usual time (five o'clock) we made our appearance to return, and we found the gipsy king in readiness with the vehicle. We took our seats; our monarch mounted his throne; and, after considerable difficulty in turning the horses' heads, during which a dozen people seemed to volunteer their services, we were at last fairly started on the road home. The passage of the Bridge and Borough seemed to have increased tenfold in difficulty since the morning, and yet our driver, as if by inspiration, flew through all. Other drivers still looked at us, and once I heard a shout, and felt a bump, and saw a truck rolling over in the gutter; but still we kept on our headlong course. Aunt, whose nerves are like iron, had gone fast asleep, and her body was jumping from side to side like a

puppet in a Punch and Judy show. The horses had never been put upon their mettle before, and they seemed delighted and astonished at their speed. I looked through the window behind me, and saw the gipsy king flourishing his whip above his head, and bumping up and down on his throne, like a jockey riding a race.

We soon left the town far in our rear, and still we kept on. Aunt had by this time become thoroughly aroused, and half-persuaded that something was wrong. All attempts to arrest the course of the gipsy king were unavailing, and Miss Granite was about to break the glass, and try to pull the wild driver from his seat, when a sudden collision with some roadside obstacle shook the vehicle like a jelly, cast us both into each other's arms, and threw both the horses on their haunches. We quickly recovered ourselves, and seized the opportunity to jump out, and question the gipsy king upon such reckless behaviour. He had got his horses on their legs again, and he was grinning with a stupid leer of satisfaction.

"Samuel," said Miss Granite, with stern decision, "you're intoxicated: where are we?"

"Mum," returned Samuel, and he was intoxicated, "you've done the—thing—'s—right—byme, an'—the gip—'s—'art's gra—grateful."

"Where are we?" again asked Miss Granite, with extraordinary firmness, while I trembled nervously, for we were on a bleak common, and it was now nearly dusk.

"You know—me," returned the gipsy king, confidentially, "my 'ome—sholly ole green'ood tree! Am I right?"

"Samuel," returned Miss Granite, "my home is Bexley town, and I insist upon being taken there."

"Mum," stammered the gipsy king, with much difficulty, and holding out his hand, "this 'and's—a—gip—'s 'and, but's never bin stai—stained wi' crime." And then he proceeded very clumsily to mount his coach-box, singing all the while in a weak, shrill, uncertain voice,

"Sa—a—a—fly fol—low 'im;
Sa—a—a—fly fol—low 'im."

"This is the teaching of those foolish girls at home, aunt," I said, feeling that I must say something, or faint.

"I don't know what it is, my dear," returned Miss Granite, "but I'm determined we will not return home with that drunken idiot, if we wander about the country all night."

The gipsy king had by this time seated himself upon the coach-box, with the reins in his hands.

"You won't—mum—werry well," he said, addressing my aunt in a little louder tone, as he saw us moving away, "you'll 'ear from me, mum—'cos I will. Rob'ry the gip—scorns as he flies—to's forest 'ome."

Saying this, he flourished his whip; and, singing loudly some song about the pleasures of a

gipsy's life, he drove madly across the common, and was soon lost in the distance, amongst the trees.

That was the last we ever saw of the gipsy king, or of the carriage. We reached a labourer's cottage, where we passed the night, and we reached our home the next evening by posting across the country. Miss Granite, in her usual way, would have no inquiry made about her loss, and she rather indulged the belief that the gipsy king had killed himself by driving over a precipice. For myself, I could only suppose that the horses had been sold at a fair in the regular irregular way; and that the carriage, if not turned into a show, was built up and disguised in the almost inaccessible depths of some forest, where it afforded a snug house of call for tramps, or a winter home for gipsies and gipsy babies.

A RELIC OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

It came into our possession quite unexpectedly, as a legacy left by an old friend of my husband. It was described in the will as a messuage or tenement, although it was actually the remains of an old Norman castle. Lawyers are precise in their language, but certainly not descriptive; and there was no getting any correct idea of the place without a personal visit. The small woodcut and the two inches of history which we found respecting it in a book upon the Antiquities of Sussex were sufficient to excite our curiosity; but not sufficient to satisfy it. With as little delay as possible, my husband went down, and his letters were enthusiastic, not to say rapturous. He had always a strong passion for the middle ages (which, I must say, I never thoroughly shared), and I was not surprised when he suddenly returned, and gave an order for our immediate removal. It was rather late in a very fine autumn, and although we had only just come back from a lengthened stay at the seaside, we closed our London establishment once more, as my husband was bent upon passing the Christmas at his new property. There was something so novel and exciting in transplanting ourselves direct from a rather dull modern square, with not even a black

statue of a statesman to give it an historical flavour, to a veritable castle in one of the oldest counties of England, full of legends and traditions, and venerable with age, that I was rather pleased than otherwise with the prospect of the change.

Our arrival produced no very great excitement in the surrounding neighbourhood, for the position of Rubble Castle (that was the title it went by) was somewhat lonely. There were several bleak hills, a scrap of moor-like common, and a bit of ragged forest near the place, and the village was four miles distant. How such a baronial dwelling came into the hands of the late owner (Mr. Vandal) we never precisely knew, though we guessed it was an unredeemed mortgage.

Our removal was attended with considerable inconvenience. Our servants were annoyed at leaving London, and more annoyed at being conveyed to what I heard them call a downright "penitentshary." The coachman and footman became friendly for the first time since they had been in our service; the old female cook, presuming on her length of servitude, was rebellious; the two housemaids were sulky and obstinate; my own maid was unusually prim and severe; and the only one who seemed to enjoy the change was little Waddles, our page.

Every room of our dreary castle was a passage, and every passage was a vault. It looked an imposing place from the outside, with its turrets, its drawbridge, its portcullis, its towers, its moat (which made the lower apartments very damp), its arched

doorways, battlements, and little peep-holes of windows; but inside there was not a room—to use a vulgar expression—that you could swing a cat in, if we except the two principal halls, which were like railway tunnels. But the most singular part about it was an old warder, who looked aged enough to have been present when the first stone of the castle was laid. He was very feeble, of course, with rheumatism, and was just one of those old servants—very unlike my servants—whose pride it is to die at their posts. And a nice post it was. A hole in the thick stone wall, like a cell. Call it a porter's lodge, or give it any fine name you will, but you cannot alter the place. It was an unmistakable cell, worse than many I saw at the model prison, where burglars and such people were humanely confined for their crimes. The old warder's duty was to attend to the portcullis and drawbridge (the only entrance across the moat), and he would allow no one to interfere with him. He had worked that portcullis and that drawbridge before the present generation was born, before the family possessors of Rubble Castle went gradually to the bad, and sold or mortgaged their ancient property, and he was not in the humour to be assisted by our coachman or footman, even if either of those lazy and dissatisfied menials had offered their inexperienced services. The portcullis and drawbridge were old—absurdly old—the machinery was antiquated, rusty, and generally out of order, and the process, in the old warder's hands, of letting any person in or out,

was a noisy, creaking performance that lasted nearly half an hour.

There was little time left for moping about, or even thoroughly examining the place, for some of the visitors—whom my husband had invited, with his usual impetuosity, to give the place a warming—were expected early in the course of the next day. We did what we could with mouldy hangings and scanty furniture, made some centuries before upholstery was raised into the dignity of an art; and, by the aid of enormous fires roaring up forge-like chimneys, we produced the appearance of comfort, if not the reality. The servants were not at all reconciled to the place upon further acquaintance, and they considered the whole removal as something little better than joining a gang of gipsies. If their situations had not been good, and their master and mistress had not been indulgent, I believe the whole body would have tendered their resignation without a moment's hesitation.

The first visitors who arrived were Mrs. and Miss Gushington, an enthusiastic widow, with her more enthusiastic daughter. They were in raptures with the castle, as I fully expected, and I was very glad of it, as it was a good example to set the servants.

“What a dear, delightful, duck of a place!” almost shouted Mrs. Gushington before the first salutations were over.

“And so old, mamma,” interposed the daughter.

“Yes, my dear,” returned the mother, “so very

old. Where did your respected husband pick up such a dear, quaint, feudal relic, Mrs. Coggleshall?"

"It was left us as a legacy," I replied.

"Oh, how charming!" returned Mrs. Gushington, with enthusiasm; "how very charming—so unexpected!"

"Don't you like the middle ages?" asked Miss Gushington, in a tone very similar to her mother.

"Not much," I answered.

"Oh, I do!" returned the young lady, in a most rapturous manner. "I think they were so nice!"

"Do you know, Mrs. Coggleshall," said Mrs. Gushington, "what I should call this place if it were mine?"

"Something very pretty, I'm sure, dear," I returned with politeness.

"The Moated Grange! after Tennyson's poem, you know?"

"Very happy, indeed, mamma," replied the daughter.

Unfortunately many of our guests were not disposed to exchange the comforts of modern civilization for the barbarity of the middle ages, without an unamiable struggle. Such were old Mr. Crowcomb and his wife. They had got the best apartment in the castle—stony, of course—that could not be helped; but a room fit for a king and queen—in the middle ages.

They did not complain direct to me or Mr. Coggleshall; but Mrs. Crowcomb's maid made frequent application for impossible things in the

kitchen. Our servants in their present temper took care to convey this to me, as a hint of their own deplorable condition.

A communication was opened with the neighbouring village (four miles distant) for the purpose of victualling the garrison. Considering the extent and the unusual character of the demand, we were tolerably well served; and it was amusing to see the old warder going through all the forms of challenging the butcher's boy in his cart on the other side of the moat, as if he had been an invading army. When he came for orders, to save the trouble of letting down the old, cranky drawbridge, they were shouted through a speaking-trumpet thrust through a slit of a window.

The first serious difficulty that I experienced in the victualling department was with the cook, who could find nothing in the shape of kitchen utensils with which she felt disposed to risk her professional reputation before company.

"It's all very well, mim," she said, "for born savidges, which was content to eat their meat raw from the points of dadgers, but it won't suit my books."

I presume that she alluded to the manners and customs of the middle-age barons at their repasts; though I did not inquire further. To get over the difficulty, without more discussion, I took her to the armoury, and made a selection of helmets, breast-plates, and a variety of odd metallic things that I knew nothing about, sufficient to set up a

cook in business at a public club-house. I knew I was committing sacrilege; but what could I do?

The moat was one of the most obtrusive nuisances that we had to deal with. It was, in parts, half-full of a green, slimy mud, and we had not been in the castle many hours before we became painfully aware of its existence.

There was no concealing the fact, nor doubting the cause, and the old warder, being the only living link that bound us to the past, was summoned to render an explanation, and suggest a remedy.

“Well, sir,” he said, “I remember the old moat loike that for more nor fifty year.”

“Yes, yes,” said Mr. Coggleshall, interrupting him, “we want to know the cause.”

“Ah!” said the venerable adjunct of the place, with a chuckle, “that’s more nor you nor I can tell. It cum loike that about a week a’ter old Sir Cleaves died, an’ they do say——”

This was sufficient for my husband, who had a special dislike of the old warder’s legends, and he dismissed the aged servant without further questioning. The next day we sent to the town for a surveyor—a person not easily found in those parts—and his report (which cost us fifty pounds), could only tell us that, in former times, the moat was supplied with water from a spring; that this spring had dried up from natural causes; that there were no means at hand for abating the nuisance except by boring for water to flush the moat, or by clearing out the mud altogether. We adopted neither

of these expensive suggestions ; but temporarily kept off the enemy by a liberal application of chloride of lime.

We had great trouble with our only child, Alexander, aged nine years, who was home for his holidays. He made a companion of little Waddles, our fat page, and together they scaled such giddy heights upon the tower-battlements, that it made everybody's heart sick to see them. When this amusement was denied to them, and the ways of access were closed and guarded to the upper parts of the castle, they let themselves out of an arrow-hole, or window, by a rope into a dry part of the moat, and were lost to the inhabitants of the castle for many hours. When they, at last, applied for readmission across the drawbridge, they were one mass of dry, light-coloured dirt from head to foot, and they had great difficulty in making themselves known to the old warder. Their story was that a treacherous part of the moat had given way, and plunged them up to their necks in the ancient mud. They had run about the common and the forest until they felt dry and comfortable, and thought they looked decent, when they had presented themselves, a little before dusk, under the notion that they might enter unobserved. Alexander had spoiled a new suit of clothes, and little Waddles had utterly destroyed his livery.

Scarcely had we recovered from this fright when we heard piercing shrieks issuing from the north turret, where Mrs. and Miss Gushington had taken

up their quarters. If it had not been for the courage of Mr. Coggleshall, I believe that no one would have ventured to investigate the cause of these sounds of terror; for Mr. Crowcomb distinctly stated that he was neither a hero, nor a crusader, and the servants were already beginning to believe in strange stories of white and red ladies who walked by night with great wounds in their breasts up and down the corridors. Mr. Coggleshall, with most praiseworthy promptitude, seized a thick stick, and went direct to the room where Mariana (Miss Gushington) was preparing herself for dinner. He found that young lady with dishevelled hair, crouching in a corner of the room, and staring wildly at two large bats, who were staring at her from two opposite corners. Mr. Coggleshall led the romantic young lady out of the room; and, after a short struggle, he put the two animals to flight. It turned out afterwards, that Mariana had opened the turret window to gaze at the rising autumnal moon, when the two brutes flew suddenly in, and nearly knocked her down in their entry.

Two other visitors arrived before we sat down to dinner—the Misses Tutbury, maiden sisters, living on their property; and, at last, after many difficulties in the series of vaults which did duty for the kitchen, the great meal of the day was served at exactly half-past eight p.m. railway time. The repast was plain, but ample,—baronial, in fact, and satisfactory enough, in its way; but the footman and coachman thought proper to wait at table wrapped

up as if prepared for a long journey outside a coach. The dress first caught my eye, but I said nothing; and then it caught my husband's eye who said a great deal.

"John Thomas and James William," Mr. Coggeshall shouted across the table, "what is the meaning of this?"

There was a little hesitation. Then the footman, although the junior, put himself forward to speak.

"I knows what it is, sir, to which you eludes, but roomatiz is a thing that will come to us all, sir, sooner or later, an' it's wrong, it is, to fly in the face of Providence."

This speech produced a sympathetic grunt from Mr. Crowcomb; but it only enraged Mr. Coggeshall still further.

"Take off that comforter, John Thomas," he said, "directly; and that ridiculous overcoat; and you, James William, either make yourself a Christian waiter, or leave the work to John Thomas. You're not driving the Carlisle Highflyer against a north wind!"

"Werry well, sir," replied the coachman, "if you wish it; but goin' hout o' this warm room—which warm it is compared with those passidges——"

An impatient gesture from Coggeshall stopped any further conversation, and the dinner was finished in silence.

During the afternoon the wind had shifted round to the north, and our position was no protection

against the keenness of the blast. Our screen from the south, composed of the bleak hills before mentioned, was perfect; but from the east and the north we had scarcely the shelter of a blade of grass. Leaving the banqueting-hall, as it is called, to go across the dark passage to that other tunnel fitted up as a drawing-room, we all felt that the two men-servants were not so very much to blame.

We retired to rest early that night, only to awake to fresh troubles the next morning. Everybody had, of course, heard strange and unearthly noises during the night (the howling of the wind along the tunnels and passages), and almost every one was full of complaints when we met at breakfast. The two Misses Tutbury had been horrified by discovering a large owl standing calmly before their toilet-glass on their dressing-table. Unlike Miss Gushington with the bat, they were strong-minded enough to drive it away with an open umbrella. Both Mrs. Gushington and her daughter were a little pinched up with cold, and a trifle—just a trifle—less enthusiastic. Mr. and Mrs. Crowcomb were, of course, sulky, especially Mr. Crowcomb; who had shouted for one hour in vain for shaving-water in his lofty chamber in the battlements, there being no bells or communications between any two parts of the building. We had to apologize for many small shortcomings at the breakfast table. Our letters, which came to us very late, contained apologies for being unable to accept our kind invitation from many gentlemen whom we had calcu-

lated upon as beaux for the ladies. This is always the case in all parties, whether in town or country ; and one note from Mr. Hal Fresco was particularly vexing to poor Mariana (Miss Gushington), who I know had come for the express purpose of meeting him at the Castle.

The county paper contained the following paragraph, which Mr. Coggleshall read to us :—

“RUBBLE CASTLE.—We are glad to learn that this interesting, ancient, historical, and local Norman relic, has passed into the hands of Udolpho Coggleshall, Esquire, a gentleman of enlarged views and ample property, in whom we hope to see those baronial glories revived which have so long lain dormant under the icy manners of the late uncongenial proprietor.”

I think my husband felt a little pride at this paragraph ; and, if so, it was soon checked by the receipt of a very large claim for poor-rates, which came amongst the letters.

“A most unjust assessment,” he exclaimed, “and I shall certainly appeal against it. One hundred and twenty pounds for poor-rates ! Why, what on earth do they reckon the rent of this”—he checked himself as he was about to say something disrespectful of the place, and added calmly, “this castle ?”

“Ah !” replied old Mr. Crowcomb, taking up the conversation, “I thought as much ; I thought as much. If you will be a baron, Coggleshall, you’ll find you must pay for it !”

We passed the short day in viewing what little was to be seen in the surrounding country ; made a pilgrimage to the nearest town—a very poor place in appearance—and returned to the Castle early in the afternoon. When we arrived in the front of the drawbridge, we noticed two persons in long beards and German hats sketching from different points, and we thought we saw a photographic apparatus moving off in the distance. A stout, elderly gentleman, in a white necktie, with several other gentlemen of equal age, but of very unequal size, were standing near the place. When Mr. Coggleshall made the necessary signal to the warder, the stout gentleman, who appeared to be the elected spokesman of the party, advanced, and said: “Have I the pleasure of addressing the new proprietor of this noble relic?”

“I am the present proprietor,” returned my husband.

“We are the acting committee of the West Sussex, or B division, of the British Archæological Association,” continued the stout gentleman, who paused for a reply.

“Indeed!” returned my husband, vacantly.

“It is a proud, but an onerous position which you occupy,” continued the stout gentleman, inquiringly.

“I don’t exactly understand you, sir,” replied Mr. Coggleshall, while we all listened with interest.

“When I say proud,” returned the stout gentleman, “I mean in owning the roof which once

sheltered the great Rufus (called Rufus the pugnosed) after the siege of Mudport ; when I say onerous, I mean in reference to what you may do with that roof."

A murmur of approbation ran through the committee, or deputation, at this speech ; and tall gentlemen stooped to whisper to short gentlemen, while short gentlemen stretched themselves to whisper to tall gentlemen.

"I suppose," replied my husband, "that I have the usual liberty to deal as I like with my own property?"

"No, sir ; pardon me," returned the stout gentleman, very excitedly, "not exactly so in this case. If I may be allowed the expression, your country has an historical lien upon these hallowed walls, and we wait upon you, as guardians of local archaeological monuments, to satisfy ourselves that the place will receive no injury in your hands."

"Then, sir," replied my husband, very coolly, "with every respect for my country, and the association you so ably represent, I must decline to satisfy you upon that point."

"You are not the possessor of a vulgar house," returned the stout gentleman, with much energy ; "you are the recipient of a sacred trust. Remove but one brick of that trust,—desecrate but one stone,—and the voice of civilized Europe will be raised in one universal yell of indignation against you !"

The drawbridge, governed by the feeble and

ancient warder, had by this time descended slowly to its place, and we prepared to cross it.

“Good day,” said my husband, turning politely to the stout gentleman and the deputation, who seemed to be astonished at the unsatisfactory result of their spokesman’s tact and eloquence.

“Good day, sir,” replied the stout gentleman, raising his hat with dignity. “Remember your trust: the eyes of your country—of the Archaeological Association—are upon you.”

We were disappointed upon our return at not finding an expected visitor, Mr. Coggleshall, senior, the father of my husband. He had written to say he would arrive at the railway-station by a certain train, and we had sent the coachman over with a carriage to meet him. The train arrived, but no Mr. Coggleshall, and the servant had come back as he went.

Dinner passed over much the same as the day before, except that one of the maids had to wait in the place of John Thomas the footman, who had gone to bed with a violent cold and face-ache. The soup was greasy, and the meat was half-raw, for the cook had become more rebellious, having been without any authoritative supervision during the day. The night was even a little colder than the last, and we retired to our stony chambers, if anything, a little earlier.

In the morning, the first thing that met my eye, as I looked somewhat early out of our window, which commanded a view of the bare country in

front of the castle, was a shabby four-wheeled fly, standing immediately opposite the portcullis entrance on the outer side of the moat. Near the fly was a bony horse, endeavouring to graze, and a shabby groom trying to warm himself by dancing, and flinging his hands under his arm-pits. Presently an old gentleman put his head out of the window of the fly, and I at once recognized Mr. Coggeshall, senior. I called my husband, and, by the time he reached the window, his father, who was very stout had with some difficulty reached the ground, and began to make signs towards the castle. Something struck us both, seeing the horse disengaged from the vehicle, that Mr. Coggeshall, senior, had passed the night in front of the moat, being unable to make the old warder hear. We at once hastened down to the cell, or lodge, and aroused the venerable servant, who was still sleeping soundly, dreaming, perhaps, of the glories of the past. Mr. Coggeshall, who is rather impatient, having assured his father through the speaking-trumpet that his presence was observed, very foolishly ventured to try his hand at the portcullis. Neither he nor the old warder was able to move it. They both struggled hard; but the more they struggled the firmer the old barrier kept its place. It soon became evident that some hours might elapse before the passage would be again opened; and in the meantime Mr. Coggeshall, senior, who was, no doubt, tired out with waiting all night, would lose all patience at any further delay. My

husband conveyed the melancholy intelligence to his exhausted parent through the speaking-trumpet, and received, in reply, some faint words, the meaning of which was eked out by unmistakable gestures of indignation. In this position the idea struck my husband, that Mr. Coggleshall, senior, might be hauled through the window by which Alexander and little Waddles got into the dry part of the moat.

The proposal having been made to the old gentleman, he seemed reluctantly to give his consent, and walked to the point indicated by his son. He got down the outer bank of the moat, and crossed it with some difficulty, and then came the all-important and heavy task of hauling him up to the window.

By this time most of our visitors had joined us; and the general opinion seemed to be, that he was a very large and heavy man, and that, when elevated to a level with the small slit of a window-hole, he would never be able to squeeze himself through. After some minutes of suspense, the purple face of Mr. Coggleshall, senior, was seen through the aperture; and it was evident to all that he could be hauled no further in that direction.

“Udolpho,” said Mr. Coggleshall, senior, with as much indignation as he could command in his peculiar position, “what is this?”

“I assure you,” replied my husband, with sorrow and humiliation——

“Kept out all night,” interrupted Mr. Coggles-

hall, senior; "and now drawn up by a common rope to a rat-hole! Try a crane, sir, for your father. Try a crane!"

A sudden twinge of the face-ache, which John Thomas felt at this moment, caused him to let go his hold upon the rope; and the loss of support sent Mr. Coggeshall, senior, gliding rapidly down the castle wall once more into the moat.

We rushed to the battlements, and saw him inciting the shabby groom to put the horse in the fly as quickly as possible; and, when the vehicle was ready he got into it. Without giving one look towards the castle and his penitent relatives, he drove away in the direction of the neighbouring town.

It was several hours after this event before the portcullis was again raised, my husband standing by in a fretful temper all the while. The first use he made of his freedom was to take a horse, and gallop after his father. It was quite dusk when he returned; but the old gentleman was not with him, having started for London by another road. Mr. Coggeshall, senior, had missed the station when he came down by going to sleep in the carriage, and had had to retrace his lost ground by an up-train. This brought him to the required point at a late hour of the night, and he had hired a fly to bring him over to the castle. When he arrived in front of the moat, everything was perfectly still; and, as both he and the driver could find nothing but very small stones to throw at the portcullis, they failed to arouse the

old warder, and had to encamp for the night. He positively refused to be reconciled to his son until he took steps to dispose of his barbarous legacy.

“Which,” said my husband, “I have determined to do ; for, though an Englishman’s house may be his castle, an Englishman’s castle will not always do for his house.”

THREE MASTERS.

I WAS never anything but a fine, old country gentleman, living upon my property, and passing the whole of my days in the sports of the field. The gun or the fishing-rod was seldom out of my hands, except when a scarlet coat was on my back, and I was on the back of my favourite steed. I was the steady, persevering amateur-butcher of my county, known and dreaded by the brute creation for miles and miles, and no huntsman's dinner, no angler's festival, was considered complete unless I consented to grace the board, either as the president or the honoured guest. No one ever thought me cruel, no one ever called me a brute; on the contrary, I was looked upon as a manly representative of a manly race, whose gradual decline and probable extinction was a great and irreparable loss to the country.

One day I went wild-duck shooting. My water-boots were out of order—in fact, I wanted a new pair; but the weather was so favourable for the sport, and I was so eager, that I could not wait until a proper equipment arrived from London. I knew I was flying in the face of danger—my old housekeeper (I have neither wife nor children) told me so; and when I came back at night, wet through

to the legs, with very strong symptoms of inflammatory cold, no one in the house expressed any surprise, unless it was at my obstinate folly.

The sequel is soon told; a high fever followed, and as I had always been very free with brandy and old port wine, I was peculiarly open to an attack of this kind, and in a few days I gave up the ghost.

On knocking for admission, in the usual way, at the door of Elysium, I met with a very cold reception at the hands of the porter.

"I think, sir," he said, "you're a little afore your time?"

"How can that be?" I asked; "I died in the regular way."

"Not exactly in the regular way," he replied, "as far as I understand it; howsomdever, it's nothing to do with me; I've only got to obey orders, and to tell you that your little place inside is not half ready, and won't be finished for some years."

"Come," I said, getting indignant, "enough of this nonsense; open the gate."

"Oh," he returned, sneeringly, handing me a written paper, "this game won't do with me; I've seen too much of it."

"You rascal," I shouted, now fully enraged, "this impertinence shall be reported to your employers."

"Report away!" he replied, laughing, "two can play at that. If a gent goes and commits

sooicide, or the next thing to it, he must take the consequences, that's all."

Before I could turn and strike him to the ground for this insult, he had closed the wicket, and I was left to grope my way once more in the outer darkness.

It was some time before I again reached daylight, and was able to read my paper. It fully authorized the remarks of the surly porter, by reproving me for the manner in which I had prematurely, and almost knowingly, put an end to a not very valuable or wisely-spent existence. It showed me how very closely such a piece of folly as I had been guilty of, in standing up to my waist in water half a-day in leaky boots, bordered upon the prohibited crime of self-destruction. My place in Elysium was not prepared for my reception, as I was not due for the next five and twenty years, and I was ordered to fill up the remainder of my allotted time on earth in the disagreeable condition of the metempsychosis.

Scarcely had I got to the end of his mandate, when I was felled to the ground; a darkness came over my eyes, which seemed to me to last for many hours; and when it cleared away, my soul had transmigrated, and I found myself a dog—a wretched, full-sized, half-fed cur, the property of a costermonger in the streets of London.

My master was poor, and considered savage; but as I had seen so much of sportsmen in my former state, I did not altogether agree with this opinion.

We lived up a filthy court without a thoroughfare, just at the back of a pile of stately mansions, and my duty was to trot by the side of my master's barrow during the day, and to keep guard over it all through the night. The work was hard and the food was scanty ; but the latter was as much as my master could afford ; and I was not in a position to complain of the former, when I recollected that I had put many animals to much more pain for my idle pleasure, than this man was compelled to inflict in the hard pursuit of a bare existence.

I was chained by a log to the street-door, which was kept open day and night, and my bed was a little rotten straw thrown down in the middle of the passage. I could not complain of this, as there were many children—dozens, perhaps—sleeping in the same house, who had no greater luxury under them. The square yard of our court was always half full of barrows, the property of the other inhabitants, who were all costermongers, like my master. There were many dogs who guarded these barrows, as I guarded my master's ; and when business was flat, and my master with some of his neighbours wanted a little amusement to raise their spirits, or to occupy their leisure, I was brought out, being a powerful dog, and set on to fight one or more of my four-footed companions. Here my master and my former self seemed to meet as sportsmen upon common ground, but it is surprising with what different feelings I regarded a dog-fight, when I was one of the combatants, instead of being one of the spectators.

Sometimes a couple of precocious urchins—the glory of the court—would drag me out to make a match while their parents all the time stood joyfully by, delighted at the signs of promise exhibited by their hopeful offspring. I could not, however, complain in my secret heart—the heart of my former self—for I well remembered the day when my father took me, a little rosy-cheeked boy of four or five years of age, to pull the trigger of a gun which was placed across a gate, by which I shot a poor sparrow that was sitting chirping on a hedge, and blew his body into a hundred pieces. The policeman on duty in the neighbourhood of my master's court, sometimes came up, and put an end to these frequent dog-fights; and arbitrary as this interference of authority undoubtedly was, it struck me it might have been exerted with great advantage upon half the great sporting estates of the country. Sometimes lady visitors from the fine houses at our back came round, protected by gentlemen, to investigate the condition of the lower orders. Of course they were shocked at our brutal habits, and our savage nature; but one of the loudest-complaining ladies of the party forgot the time when I had seen her at her country-house, looking with delight through her gold eye-glass at the drawing of a sturdy badger.

One morning my master, either forgetting or being ignorant of the state of the law, fastened me to his barrow to help in drawing a heavy load—a task that I had anything but a relish for. I was

obstinate, and would not pull, which so exasperated my employer, that he struck me several times with a stick across the back, as I had often struck an unruly horse in the country. This brutality—as it was called—was seen by several people who cried “shame ;” and by a policeman, who took my master and his barrow into custody.

“What’s the meaning of this flying in the face of an Act of Parliament?” asked the magistrate.

“I don’t know anythin’ about hacts,” said my master, “I’m tryin’ to get a livin’.”

“Very likely,” returned the magistrate, “but you’re not allowed to get it with dogs. You’re fined one pound.”

“More shame for ’em,” shouted my master, “he’s as strong as a ’os.”

“You’re fined a pound,” repeated the magistrate, closing all further controversy.

My master was not prepared to pay the fine upon the spot, and his barrow was, therefore, impounded while he went in search of the money. The policeman unhooked me to let me walk about the yard, and seizing an opportunity, I squeezed myself through a small space under a gate, and turned my back, for ever, upon my unfortunate master and his barrow.

I wandered for many hours about the town, getting very tired and hungry, for I had had nothing all day, except some milk which I had stolen out of a milk-can that stood open by some area-railings.

My walk during the afternoon and evening had been through a very genteel, not to say aristocratic, part of the metropolis, where the roads and gutters were swept so very clean, that they formed a desert of perfect hopelessness to a half-starved dog, like myself. Shortly after dusk I found myself in a low outskirt of the town, that would have been country, but for a long range of cinder heaps, that blackened the whole prospect. Going some distance past these black hills—still on the main road—I came suddenly upon a small, wretched hut, one half of the rafters of which were visible through the roof. As I was lingering in front of this building, the door suddenly opened, and a man stood full in the doorway. He seemed astonished and glad to catch sight of me, and beckoned me in with friendly signs, and the additional temptation of a piece of bread. I did not altogether like the place, but the man appeared friendly, the food was very tempting after a long tramp, and a longer fast, and at last I entered. The man closed the door behind me, as I was eating the bread, and then called to some one who was in the back part of the premises. A shrill voice answered the call, and shortly afterwards an old, sooty-faced woman made her appearance, who was much more repulsive in my eyes than the man. He was powerful, rough, and gipsy-like in aspect; while she was sinewy, witch-like, and fierce in expression. They stood at some distance from me, conversing in a low tone, while I was busy with the food the man had given me.

“Three 'arf crowns, at least,” said the woman, eagerly, “for a skin like that.”

“No,” said the man, sternly, “I won't 'av' it. I can sell him alive for that.”

“Keep 'im, then,” replied the woman, sharply, “an' see 'im eat 'is 'ed orf in two days.”

“I'd like to keep 'im altogether,” returned the man, looking at me with admiration,—“a fine fellow.”

“We don't want money, do we?” asked the woman, with a savage expression; “cinder-sifting will bring it in a 'urry, won't it?”

This last speech seemed to have the desired effect upon the man, for the next moment I found myself in his powerful grasp, out of which there was no escape, and I saw the woman coming towards me with a bright, sharp-pointed knife. Putting the previous conversation and these signs together, it was not difficult to understand that their object was to skin me alive for the sake of my skin, which is doubled in value when taken from a living animal. Looking back at my past self, I was conscious of many things that I had connived at in quiet country places, not very different from this, without having the excuse of hard necessity as some sort of palliation. These were my human reflections; and while I was indulging in them, my animal instincts had taken care of my miserable body, by causing me to yell and howl at the top of my voice. The man tried to stop this uproar, by clasping my jaw, but I gave him so much trouble to hold me down in my

struggles, that he was compelled to let me howl to my heart's content. Just as the old hag had got me into a position favourable to her operations, the door of the hut burst suddenly open, and several men stood in the room, and crowded round the doorway. The old woman dropped her knife, and the man dropped me to face the unwelcome intruders, who were a party of excursionists going home in a van, and while passing the hut they had been arrested by my howls of distress. The man and woman offered some rambling explanation, but it was of no avail, and the two miscreants, as they were called, were taken to town by my deliverers, to answer the charge of cruelty to a dog. The next morning, before a magistrate, they were sentenced each to three months' imprisonment with hard labour, amidst the applause of a crowded court; and I slunk away once more unobserved, to seek my fortunes in another direction.

My last night's experience had taught me to avoid the outskirts of the town; of the country I did not feel a very high opinion; and I therefore turned in a way that I supposed must lead me towards the centre of the metropolis. I had not gone far when I entered a spacious park, with well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, with livery servants, horses, carriages, and every sign of luxury and wealth. I again began to feel the pangs of hunger, which came on with most annoying regularity; and as I could find nothing eatable upon the trim gravel walks, I took the liberty of snapping a large bun

from the hand of a grossly over-fed boy in a velvet dress. The child was almost paralyzed with fright, and before it could turn round and complain to its nurse, who was flirting with a very long, thin soldier, who seemed all legs, I was fairly out of sight amongst the trees. Going past a seat in one of the most pleasant parts of the park, my attention was drawn to a very benevolent-looking, stout, middle-aged gentleman, who wore spectacles, through which he was reading a book. There was something so delightfully calm—so comfortable—so good-humoured and respectable about this person, that I could go no farther, but lay upon the ground with my tongue hanging out, and my tail wagging in a most imbecile manner. If fate, I thought, had but given me such a master, I could have carried baskets, fetched sticks out of ponds and rivers, stood upon my hind-legs, or performed any other well-known canine feats in a transport of joy and thankfulness. I was not long in this attitude before I attracted the attention of the placid gentleman, who gave me such signs of encouragement, as he slowly arose to go away, that I followed him meekly without any hesitation. We did not go far before we entered a quiet, spacious square, at a large corner house of which my new acquaintance appeared to reside. When he rang the bell the door was immediately answered by a servant in livery.

“George,” said the old gentleman, very mildly, “take this dog in and see him properly provided for.”

The benevolent gentleman's commands were instantly obeyed; and, in a few minutes, I found myself in a large dog's-house in a stable at the end of the garden, with a large pan of water and a large dish of bones and broken meat before me. When I had satisfied my hunger, and began to feel more happy, I looked about me, and I saw three other dogs'-houses of various sizes. In one of these was a small black-and-tan terrier; in another a dog much larger, of the Scotch terrier breed; in another a still larger dog of the bull-terrier kind; while I made the fourth and largest, being a mixture of the Newfoundland and the shepherd's dog. I learned in conversation with my new friends, who were all very sociable, that one had been bought of a man in the streets, another had been presented to the old gentleman by a friend, and the third had been encouraged to follow our master in the same way as I had. They were all well-fed and well-attended to, being taken out in turns by the servants for exercise, but never by their master. They had speculated much upon the character of the old gentleman, but they had not arrived at any satisfactory conclusion. He was not a dog-fancier, that was certain, nor was he of a sporting turn (I winced at this phrase), for he never went to the country; and why they were kept there, as if to be looked at, and yet were never looked at, was a mystery they were unable to unravel, even with my intelligent assistance.

For some weeks I was kept in the state my

companions had described, and I began to get rather weary of the monotony of my life, when one morning there seemed to be an unusual stir in the house, and shortly after breakfast several servants came down to the stable, and took the whole four of us in a body into the dining-room. The placid old gentleman, our master, was there, and several other old gentlemen equally respectable in appearance, equally adorned with spectacles, and equally placid in their manners.

“George,” said our master, mildly, to one of the servants, “is the surgery prepared?”

“Quite prepared, sir,” replied the servant.

“Will you be kind enough, then,” said our master, very blandly, “to carry out my instructions?”

Upon these orders the black-and-tan terrier was first taken away, and, after the lapse of a few minutes, the servants returned for the Scotch terrier, and, after that, for the bull-terrier. Although we were walking about the dining-room before being removed to the surgery, the gentlemen assembled with our placid master took no notice of us, but kept up an animated conversation amongst themselves near the windows that looked into the square in front. At last, my turn came, and I went with my conductor, and some little misgivings, towards the surgery. When I got there, before I had time to observe what had become of my companions, I was seized by several men, and fastened on a rack which held me firmly, face upwards,

extended by the four legs, and in my mouth was placed a round block of wood, which prevented my making a noise. Scarcely had the servants settled me in this uncomfortable position, when I was conscious of the room being filled with the placid gentlemen, and of a very strong smell of drugs and physic.

“Since our last meeting, gentlemen,” said a voice, which I recognized as our master’s, “as you are probably aware, I have carried on a controversy in the public prints with a correspondent who signs himself *Canis Familiaris*.” It is not for me, in this room, to speak of my own triumphs, but it must be evident to you all that a mere theorist like my anonymous opponent can have little chance in an argument with an unflinching experimentalist like myself. When *Canis Familiaris* asserts that a decoction of *Apocynum* (the common poisonous plant known as dog’s-bane) will not kill a healthy dog, I silence him for ever when I reply that I have administered with my own hands fourteen different doses of this vegetable poison to fourteen different dogs of various sizes, and that I have their lifeless bodies now in my dissecting-room, as a proof against all the world.”

A murmur of satisfaction was heard from the placid gentlemen after this speech, mingled with the clatter of glasses. At first I supposed our time had come, and that draughts of dog’s-bane were being poured out for our immediate destruction; but I found from the smell that sherry was being

drunk, and from the thick voices of the placid gentlemen that biscuits were being eaten.

“Doctor Borax,” said our master, with an ill-suppressed air of triumph, “do you still adhere to your assertion that the fossil we have here is not the remains of the common dog?”

“I do, distinctly,” replied Dr. Borax, rather indistinctly, for his mouth was half full of biscuit.

“Very well,” returned our master, with a chuckle, “I assert the contrary; and, what is more, I am prepared to prove, by direct comparison, that the fossil is the remains of one of two dogs—the Scotch terrier, or the bull-terrier.”

Another murmur of satisfaction ran round the room at the close of this confident remark, mingled still with the clatter of wine-glasses, and the crunching of crisp biscuits.

“Here,” said our master, with the air of a conjuror, placing his hand upon a substance which made a hollow sound, “I have a full-grown, healthy specimen of the bull-terrier, and here” (there was another hollow sound) “I have an equally favourable specimen of the Scotch terrier.”

There was a general movement at this point amongst the placid gentlemen, as if for examination; and I judged rightly from the two hollow sounds that my unfortunate dog-companions were similarly situated to myself close to where our master stood, and that he had caused the noise by dropping his hand upon their extended stomachs. When the placid gentlemen appeared to be satisfied,

our master clicked a small table-bell, which was immediately answered by the usual servant.

“George,” said our master, “take those two dogs down to Mr. James in the dissecting-room, who will prepare them according to my instructions.”

While these orders were being carried out, my master resumed his discourse.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “to return in the interim to this question of the effect of the vulgar poison known as dog’s-bane, upon the common dog; I am prepared to show you how erroneous is the general impression that the greater the size of the animal, the greater will be the power of resisting the action of this deadly herb. I have proved by the fourteen dogs that I have already destroyed, that dog’s-bane is not merely an ignorant, groundless title for a common plant (as asserted by *Canis Familiaris*, and many others), but that it is the most nauseous and effective poison that can be administered to the whole canine race.”

Another murmur of approval followed this speech, still joined by the clatter of wine-glasses.

“Let us understand you distinctly, doctor,” said a very mild gentleman in the room, who appeared to be taking notes; “you say a large dog will expire under an equal dose of dog’s-bane, earlier than a smaller dog?”

“I do,” returned the doctor, proudly; “and to carry out my invariable plan of experiment, I have provided a small black-and-tan terrier, and a large

specimen of the mixed Newfoundland and shepherd breed, upon both of which it is my intention to operate before your eyes."

Alarmed as I was at the danger of my position, I could not help indulging in reflections upon nice distinctions; and as I had learned how fine was the line which divided suicide from an obstinate running into fatal danger, I was now anxious to know why my two former tormentors were punished by an offended law, while this little knot of half-employed doctors, without any secrecy, could destroy a hundred animal lives for the sake of a crotchety theory, and be protected by the broad shield of cold-blooded and pretended science.

While I was occupied with these thoughts, I heard a faint gurgling sound, which I presumed came from my small companion, the black-and-tan terrier, as he swallowed the fatal dose. My master then came towards me with a funnel and a goblet containing a dark liquid; and I endeavoured to soften his heart by a piteous, appealing look. My effort was thrown away upon a pompous, self-sufficient, shirt-frilled, attitudinizing smatterer of science: the funnel was inserted in my half-opened mouth, by the side of the gagging-block; the horrid draught was poured down my parched throat; my heart sickened, as the fumes of a hundred druggists'-shops arose to my brain; my eyes closed, and I seemed to fall headlong through the earth.

Ill, I had been—very ill—and weak, I remained,

without a doubt, lying upon my bed in my own room in the country, attended by my doctor and my old housekeeper. The cold I had caught in the duck-pond had turned to brain fever, and I had been long delirious. The first use I made of my slowly returning strength was to put a little more humanity into my field-sports; to change my rod and gun for a ball and a bat, and to make a bowling-green and a cricket-ground of unrivalled excellence upon my estate; to which all the lads of the country are always welcome.

A FEARFULLY PRACTICAL MAN.

He looked a romantic being: his hair was brushed behind his ears, his collar was turned down, his eyes seemed dreamy and abstracted. I met him in the one public room of an old, picturesque inn, which stood on a narrow winding road, between a double range of lofty mountains. Above us were the misty gorges that seemed to reach the gates of heaven; below us—far below us, in the valley—was the foaming mountain torrent; and in front of us were the crumbled ruins of an ancient castle. The stranger was promising; the prospect was sublime. I had already fled from another inn, at another point of the valley, because in front of my window, standing between me and the eternal beauties of Nature, was a wretch—I could call him nothing better—dressed in full evening costume, even to a high cravat, defiling the awful grandeur of the scene by looking at it patronizingly through a gold and ivory opera-glass! I fled before my hands were stained with his blood, and a few hours found me at the other hostelry, in the presence of the mild-eyed romantic-looking stranger. I longed for sympathy, for communication with a mind of congenial tastes. I had been for weeks without a companion; my poetry was getting rusty, my metaphysics wanted

air. There was that about the stranger which attracted me, and I approached him with hopefulness.

“Is it not a scene,” I asked with enthusiasm, “worthy of Salvator Rosa’s pencil?”

“Worthy,” returned the stranger, musingly, “of something better.”

“Sir,” I said, with astonishment, “what can be better?”

“I was thinking,” he replied, “what splendid water-power, in that mountain cataract, is thrown away unproductively.”

“Water-power!” I exclaimed; “would you defile these awful solitudes with a vulgar mill?”

“I hate an awful solitude,” said the stranger, firmly; “it is a barren, accursed spot in a world of fruitfulness, fit only for artists to draw and cockney tourists to admire. What man of reflection can look with delight upon that portion of Nature which attracts no capital, because it is capable of yielding no per-centage?”

“Is it possible,” I exclaimed, with sorrow, for he was youthful enough to be my son, “that one so young, and so intelligent, can be so completely a prey to the doctrines of the utilitarian school?”

“The world is governed by them,” he replied; “at least that portion of it which is not content to rot upon pauper relief. The very landlord of the roof that covers us has fixed himself here, not that he loves the place, but because it pays him. The mountain, the valley, the cataract, are all considered in his calculations; and though they may not ap-

pear as separate items in his bill, they have a considerable influence upon its gross amount. The dweller in yonder gray dwarfed hut upon the hill-side, is another human adjunct of the place. He is the showman of the works of God. He has claimed a property in the wild and the picturesque, and his claim, like the claim of the city crossing-sweeper, is respected by yonder half-starved dwellers in that wretched village on the plain. For a certain number of shillings he will discourse to you upon the beauties of Nature—the natural beauties, bear in mind, of this particular spot, for he has no knowledge, no sympathy, no connection, in fact, as the tradesmen say, with the adjoining establishment, ten miles off, where there are more mountains, more valleys, and more streams. Give him his fee, and you shall hear a long and lying legend of yonder ruined castle; but if your money is not forthcoming, the castle, the legend, Nature, and yourself, may go to perdition for what he cares.”

“The man may be weak,” I replied, “but the dignity of the historical relic and the interest of its traditions still remain.”

“I am surprised,” returned the youthful stranger, becoming more animated, “that you, as a man of the world, can say so. The castle has sunk to the level of a booth at a fair. It was bought at an auction by a speculative capitalist, some years back; and the registered charge for admission pays him a very excellent per-centage on his venture.”

“Don’t use that dreadful term, ‘per-centage,’ in

connection with such things," I replied, rather annoyed at being found in error upon a matter of fact.

"And why not," asked the young and pertinaacious utilitarian, "when per-centages govern nearly every relation of life? That winding road, running over the mountains, which you admire so much; and so do I—in pictures; of what use is its undulating beauty, except to increase the cost of provisions fifty per cent. before they reach the inhabitants of that wretched village on the plain?"

"Why don't the inhabitants leave the village," I asked, in triumph, "and live in the distant market-town, where the provisions come from?"

"There are many reasons against that," he replied, not at all disconcerted, "the chief one being a difference of two hundred per cent. in the matter of house-rent. The neighbouring market-town (ten miles distant), in addition to being already crowded with population, has the misfortune to be situated near a volcano, and to be subjected to occasional earthquakes. Leaving the earthquakes out of the question, the volcano (of which you are no doubt a distant admirer) has a perceptible influence upon the value of house-property within the range of its eccentric operations. The science of insurance not having yet reached this spot, the convulsions of Nature—that, I believe, is the term—are not discounted beforehand; and the natural consequence is, that the landlord looks for his safety and profit in a high tariff for houses."

There was nothing I could contradict in this, and I therefore held my peace.

“I have travelled much,” continued the unromantic stranger, “and I have found the law of per-centages the same in all countries. The brigands of Spain, about whom so much exciting fiction has been spread through the pages of our story-books, lose all their picturesque and adventurous character upon closer acquaintance, and sink to the prosaic level of an English turnpike. Travellers look for them as a matter of course; their sudden appearance from the roadside ambush is mechanically provided for; the regulation bag of money is handed over to them without resistance; the rifled carriage departs in one direction, the gorged banditti in another; and the whole thing ends far more quietly and tamely than the payment of a commuted tithe. Commercial travellers in the wine-trade are now the chief sufferers; and they tell me that the bandits’ tax amounts in English money to about a shilling a mile; or a charge upon their goods of twenty per cent., which the purchaser has, of course, to pay.”

“Thank Heaven!” I exclaimed, “we have no such absurdities in England.”

“Hundreds,” returned the young utilitarian, coolly, “if it were worth our while to search for them; even the whole army of Customs’ duties, and their cost of collection. The bandits’ tax is illegal, because it only benefits the individual; the Customs’ tax is legal, because it benefits the State. The

distinction is plain ; but the difference is not so obvious."

"Does everything," I inquired, "present itself to your peculiarly trained mind in the same form—eternally balanced by what you please to call the law of per-centage?"

"Everything," replied the stranger. "The man who is loudest in his complaints of the nuisance of an adjoining den for stewing down old floor-cloth forgets the influence which his obnoxious neighbour has had upon his rent. The smell of a soap-boiling yard is not a pleasant thing, especially at dinner-time ; but there is a per-centage of reduction, which, coming from a landlord, would make even that nuisance a tolerated if not an agreeable companion. We may push the investigation further. The accidents that afflict humanity are painful things, but their possible occurrence is calculated beforehand, and raises the rate of wages."

"Sir !" I said, with some little indignation, for I began to be annoyed at the infallible tone of the stranger, "you have taken the bloom from the grand and beautiful in Nature ; but the human race, in its sorrows and its sufferings, is too sacred a subject to be dealt with lightly."

"I deal with nothing lightly," returned the stranger ; "I merely observe and record the things that are. There is hardly anything granted to humanity which humanity is not willing to sell. Health, freedom, even life itself, go for little in the scale against the all-powerful law of per-centages. I

may sink two shafts upon this very spot—and, by the way, there are abundant indications of coal and iron”—(I shuddered at the thought), “and one mine shall be a perfect subterranean paradise, the other a constant prey to fire and choke-damp. Will the first be crowded with miners and the second deserted? Certainly not. The wages of the last will be advanced a hundred per cent upon the first, and the balance of labour in both mines will be perfect.”

“Horrible doctrine!” I murmured.

“But true,” responded the stranger. “If I improve the ventilation in the dangerous mine—more it may be for the economy of working than the love of my fellow-creatures—in proportion as I succeed so does the per-centage of my profits rise and the per-centage of my miners’ wages fall.”

“Have you any heart or sympathy,” I inquired; “or are you merely a splendid automaton capable of speech?”

“I have both heart and sympathy,” replied the stranger, “but I do not throw them away. The gambler stakes his fortune on the game, and claims no pity when he loses. He is logical and self-reliant. The workman, moved by the high per-centage of wages, goes with open eyes into a noxious lead-mill, and takes the consequences. When, in the common course of things, his face becomes puffed and bloated as an apple-pudding, and his toes sometimes come off with his boots, he has no right to look at me with a rueful countenance—he has played, and he has lost——”

At this moment the gentleman in full evening costume, whom I fled from in disgust at another part of the valley, came suddenly into the room.

“Young man, young man!” said the old beau, looking through an eye-glass, and at once addressing the unromantic stranger in a tone of dignified severity, “do we meet again, and do I still find you preaching your dangerous and pernicious doctrines to any one who will listen to them?”

“I sought no audience,” said the stranger, good-humouredly, “and I seek no converts. You are old and poetical; I am young and practical. I may be mistaken, but I think the world is at present with me. Good day.”

“Eccentric but highly-gifted being,” I said, “before you go, tell me how it is you wear the outer garb of poesy, without the inner heart?”

“Because,” returned the unromantic stranger, with a glance of meaning at the old beau’s stiff and lofty cravat, “it increases my comfort two hundred per cent., and saves me another two hundred per cent. in washing.”

He turned to leave the room, but before he went he lingered at the door for a parting word, and said, addressing me with a mysterious emphasis—

“Give me another ten years before you return to this place; even to the hour, and to the day.”

There was a hidden meaning—even a threat in this remark, and it dwelt in my ear. The gentleman in the full evening costume denounced the departed stranger as a serious young coxcomb, and

although I assented outwardly, I had my doubts. The gentleman in the full evening costume discoursed upon metaphysics—even to the dizzy heights of Kant and Hegel—and I was surprised that external appearances led me into flying hastily from such an agreeable companion. The gentleman in the full evening costume dwelt upon poetry, and I was content to listen for hours, for he had touched a sympathetic chord.

“I cannot account,” he said, “for the effect which Moore’s writings had upon my mind, for I was not a young man at the time.”

From that moment our friendly intercourse was complete.

Years rolled on, and I had not forgotten the mysterious words of the young and unromantic stranger. The time came round, and I could not resist the impulse to return once more to the mountain valley. I had travelled, in the interval, almost incessantly; living with many strange people who spoke in many strange tongues. I had met the gentleman in the full evening costume in many noted cities; and at last I had seen him die with propriety, and buried in a cemetery far from his native land. His hotel-bills were always paid; and he was followed with regret.

It was the very day of the year—almost the very hour—when I arrived at the entrance of the mountain-pass. The solitude seemed unaccountably destroyed; the roads were level and more direct; the embankments were well-formed and carefully

kept; there was a novel hum of life, and many people and loaded waggon passed me to and fro. I pursued my way, doubting and bewildered, until I came to the spot where once stood the old roadside inn. Its place knew it no more, and a row of cottages, neat and new, occupied its position, overlooking the valley below.

A young man was standing in the front of this small and elevated settlement, evidently waiting for me, though not looking as if he expected my approach. It was the unromantic stranger.

"Is it possible," he said, "that one so dreamy, and so imaginative, can punctually keep an appointment of ten years' standing?"

"I am here," I replied, "impelled by a mysterious curiosity; and I see at a glance what it is you have to show me."

I looked down into the valley. The mountain stream was bridged over in several places, and studded with many mills in full activity; some with large turning wheels; some with lofty chimneys which gave forth volumes of black smoke. Many people were hurrying along the roads of the plain, which now led to a large and busy town, instead of the wretched collection of huts that was once the village. In the distance was the mouth of a large tunnel, which denoted a new road through the mountains, and many shafts of mines and iron-works dotted the hill-sides in all directions.

"And you have been the author of all this?" I said, turning to my companion.

"No," he said, laughing; it is still the eternal per-centages. I have been the originator, but the mineral productiveness of the mountain, the water-power of the stream, have caused this change from death to life."

"The poetry is gone," I replied; "the hard reality remains."

"Not so," he returned; "for there is a poetry of labour and success, as well as of idleness and decay. The ground beneath our feet is now a hollow hive of industry, shaming the silent grotto of Antiparos in beauty, grandeur, and extent. The caverns in the mountain side—no longer the home of wolves and bears—are filled with the ring of hammers held by stout-armed men, who work by fires till they glow as in the sunset. The lofty chimney, which rises on yonder hill, is a monument worth all the columns raised to heroic fools; and at night it stands out sharply against the clear, blue sky, while the golden stars and planets cluster round its summit, crowding to peep down into the fierce white furnace below."

The pleading, able as it was, did not prevail, and I still retained the convictions of a life. I turned my back for ever upon the place, and at the same moment that I blotted out the valley from my ancient tourist's guide, another pen was busy in recording its claims as one of the greatest industrial wonders of the age.*

* This paper was first published in the *National Magazine*.

A STARTLING CONFESSION.

I WILL no longer conceal the fact from an excited world :—I am the man—the miscreant—the morbid maniac—the misguided wretch, if you will have it so, who burned down Shakespeare's house, on the night of the eighteenth of March, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven. I am not an irresponsible being ; I am cool and collected, I am in full possession of all my faculties, I never even wrote a commentary upon the works of the man whose memory I have injured, I was not hurried into the execution of the deed by any rash impulse, it was a well-matured, deliberate act, and I glory in it. It is not given to all men to have high aspirations. The Duke of Wellington won the battle of Waterloo ; Lord Cardigan would have been content with describing it. Many men have shot at royalty, some have stolen Babylonian testers, others have cracked a Portland vase. There are some inferior minds that find a feeble pleasure in carving the name of the beloved one across the nose of an Elgin marble, or poking an umbrella through a Holy Family. Others, who would shrink from the crime of defacing a statue, will “edit” a book, and scrawl it all over with “notes,” signed with their names at full length. Many well-regulated members of

literary society have not the courage to strike an enemy on the mouth in the open highway, they call him anonymously a liar, a thief, and a jackass, in the columns of their particular organ, and they send their children to the sea-side with the proceeds of the article. I am a practical man, and do not war with ink-stands. If I thought Mahomet an impostor, I should not write tracts to prove him so, I should tear his coffin down though all Mecca ran with molten lead. I hate Shakespeare, and I have annihilated the accursed barn that has for years attracted the attention of the world as his birthplace.

I will explain all—the cause as well as the effect—the origin of my hate, and my motive for action. I was the author of a tragedy—a tragedy in twelve acts, with thirty-six tableaux, and seventy-two scenes, with one hundred and forty-four deaths, murders in every form that the ingenuity of man can suggest, in which the dead were piled up in the orchestra as they were in a plague-pit of the olden time, and the blood was mopped up like water between the parts—(for which the indulgence of the audience was requested), and which was strengthened by a metaphysical undercurrent that would have employed the analytical powers of the critics till the day of judgment. This monument of my genius, the result of twelve years' seclusion, hard study, and unremitting toil, was destroyed by a set of whirling bacchanals in as many minutes. When my work was completed, it was placed in the hands of the most eminent manager in London for perusal. Time

rolled on. Shakespeare was on the stage, was in the bills, was in the green-room, the past, present, and future of the theatre. I received no communication. I waited two years; and still Shakespeare held possession of the field. When I saw the eternal underlining of his name in the bills, I felt that I could have wrung the neck of the Swan of Avon. One memorable morning the newspaper conveyed to my anxious eyes the startling intelligence that part of the theatre had been burned down by an accident during part of the performance of a play of Shakespeare's—the eternal Shakespeare's—on the previous night. I rushed to the place and found my worst forebodings realized. A troop of supers, maddened by the wild whirlings of a Satyr dance, had accidentally fired the theatre, and the library with all its contents was totally destroyed. I will not dwell further upon the painful subject. Compensation—poor satisfaction—was offered me, and at once refused. My hatred of Shakespeare had now developed into a settled plan of revenge, and I avoided anything that might have turned me from my purpose. I decided at once to destroy the shrine of the saint,—the butcher's shop,—the miserable hut at Stratford-on-Avon.

I am not a man to sleep upon my resolves. The next day found me walking up that quiet street in Stratford. I entered the house in which the playwright, my enemy, was born, with a strange pleasure akin to that which a Huron Indian might feel when the scalp of the white man is in his grasp, or a

native of Otaheite, while surveying the approach of a vessel of victims. It was about four in the afternoon, and I prayed for the shades of night, that I might commence the work of destruction. It was not the fear of punishment that deterred me even then, in the broad daylight, from pulling down the frail rafters, and crunching the whitewashed, autograph scribbled wall in my sacrificial hand: it was the fear of failure. I restrained myself by a superhuman effort, and went calmly over the premises, listening with affected attention to the story of the female guide. Here he was born;—here the viper was nourished that had stung me to the heart.

She read over to me the list of the worshippers at the shrine; read them from where they were registered, on window panes, on the ceiling, in corners, across each other on the wall—upon the floor—within the chimney—clustering upon the rickety door, a curious mosaic of human names, from the vice-regent of God upon earth to the common hangman. How very like a lot of commentators they looked, the clinging parasites. She told me how kings had come to that wretched hut, come with all their state and left it at the door, entering meek and humble as the poorest of us all. How one whose name the world had learned to curse was found in tears, thinking perhaps, of all his mis-spent life; thinking of the bitter pages of history; thinking how few would seek *his* princely birthplace with feelings of love and reverence, save for its splendid architecture, its gorgeous pictures,

its works of genius which he could only buy. Did I waver in my stern resolve? Perhaps, for a moment: but I thought of my burning play, and steeled my heart. I paid the fee to my conductress—nearly the last fee she was destined to receive—and descended the stairs. At the door was a lounging London idler, with a party of ladies, who inquired, in a drawling tone,—“Aw,—is this Shakespeare’s house?” No, I thought, as I wended my way to the inn, it is mine,—mine, body and soul.

It was a dark night, and by nine o’clock, in the part of the town where the house stood, you could scarcely see across the road. Before ten the street was clear, the whole of the inhabitants had retired to rest, and only here and there did a solitary candle linger in the windows of the bed-chambers, slightly relieving the surrounding gloom. I sallied forth, nerved for the deed, and fully prepared with the materials for executing it. Half a dozen balls of pitched tow, and some matches to light them with, were what I had prepared for the task. I arrived before the house, no living creature watched my footsteps, and I found the upper window slightly open, as if favouring my design. The match and the ball of tow were in my hand. Did I hesitate at that instant? Perhaps I did, but like an ancient Image-Breaker, I overcame the momentary weakness, and hurled the burning missile into the sacred room. A faint light followed the act, which rose and fell several times, until at last it settled into a

deep glow, and I knew then that the house of my enemy, with all its traditions, its memorials and associations, would, in the short space of an hour, be numbered with the things that were.

The alarm was given, and the bewildered townspeople rose from their beds, and rushed to the fire. I stood on one side, watching the crowd, their faces lighted up with the glow. I watched them sternly and calmly as the dealer out of retributive justice. Some there were who looked on with a vacant gaze of speechless astonishment,—boors, irreclaimable boors ;—others whose faces beamed with savage satisfaction, the animal pleasure of seeing a fire ;—some, more thoughtful or calculating than the rest, presented sorrowful countenances, which plainly showed that they felt the glory of the town was departing. One little group particularly attracted my attention ; they were four Germans from Munich. They had only just arrived in the town, on a pilgrimage of duty to the birthplace of Shakespeare, and had scarcely arranged for quarters at an hotel when they were called out to witness the fire. It was not easy, at first, to make them understand that the fast consuming ruin before them was the house of the playwright—the house they had travelled so far to see. Perhaps they lingered too long amidst the seducing gaieties of the Metropolis ; perhaps they had been indolent, and had missed an early train ; whatever the cause, when the fact dawned upon them a concerted groan broke from the party, and a shadow of remorseful reproach spread over their faces. They

had journeyed painfully to the hallowed shrine to find that its place knew it no more; to find the sacred fountain filled with sand from which they hoped to refresh their craving souls. That night four Wilhelm Meisters went to bed in the humble sleeping-rooms of the "Red Lion."

The crowd all this time was active, but it was the unorganized activity of bewilderment and fear. However, they saved the solitary female in the house—my guide of the afternoon—though they could not preserve a stone of the building. She passed me in their arms, uttering loud and frequent protestations that she had put out her candle. To crown the evening's proceedings, the local fire-engine made its appearance, slowly dragged by some aged paupers, who had been roused out of their beds, and were hardly awake enough to know what they were doing. It arrived on the spot just as the last darting flame had died away, and the choking white smoke began to ascend from the few embers that were yet left unconsumed upon the ground. The towns-people now gathered together in little conversational groups; some giving it as their opinion that the house was always "a rotten old sty;" others were gathered round an energetic man, who was demonstrating that the fire arose purely from spontaneous combustion. I observed an active-looking man get into a gig, and drive sharply out towards the Leamington Road. He was hastening to telegraph the disaster to the London papers. I took the hint, and returned to

my inn; a gig was soon got ready, and in a couple of hours I was at Warwick, seated in a first-class carriage of the London mail train. My companions did not disturb me; they had come through from the North, and were mere bundles of clothes, sleeping in varied and painful postures. If Birmingham had been burned down, it would not have disturbed them. As for myself, my revenge was satisfied; and feeling a sense of repletion like a starving man after a full meal, I slept soundly. At six o'clock the same morning I reached my lodgings without having met with any indication that the catastrophe at Stratford-on-Avon was yet known in town.

When I went to my club—about twelve o'clock the same day, I was conscious of a new feeling that had supplanted my old passion of revenge. I felt now as if I had the power of making myself invisible, and mingling in the world to hear the opinions of my fellow-men upon the deed of last night, without divulging my participation in it. Entering the news-room, I saw what I expected in the second edition of the *Times* :—

(BY ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.)

GREAT FIRE AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON!

TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF SHAKESPEARE'S HOUSE!

At last I tasted the intoxicating pleasure of being the sole possessor of a great secret. How glorious it was to sit there and hear the remarks of

the members upon the intelligence, their suppositions as to how the fire occurred, whether it was the result of accident or design, the various views which different men took of the loss, to be spoken to upon the subject, and, with so much knowledge, to affect an ignorance even below the general level. I now sympathized with the author of *Waverley*; and understood what Junius must have felt, as, wrapped in his impenetrable cloak, he read his letters in the columns of Woodfall's papers. I went into the street, and found little groups of men talking at corners, in omnibuses, in banking-houses, in coffee-rooms, upon 'Change, on steam-boats, everywhere the same, and I mingled with them as one of a superior race. How welcome to me was the flood of newspaper leaders which appeared upon the all-engrossing subject for the next few days. I can quote some of the principal articles by heart:—

THE "TIMES"—*March 20th, 1857.*

"Hardly has the public mind recovered from the shock caused by the destruction of the Great National Theatre, when it is again subject to a new trial by the intelligence conveyed in our columns of yesterday—the house in which the immortal Shakespeare was born has ceased to exist. The evidence at present before us goes to prove that it has fallen a sacrifice to the malice or folly of some miserable scoundrel whose morbid love of notoriety will probably be best served by the discovery and punishment which the crime so well merits. There are some men to whom obscurity is so distasteful that, rather than not be noticed at all, they would sigh out a serenade to the Princess Royal under the walls of Windsor Castle, or if not sentimentally but destructively inclined, would fire a handful of broad beans at Her Gracious Majesty while she was listening to the

improper strains of the "Traviata." If the melancholy wretch, whom a few days will bring to justice, had felt a genuine "call" for Iconoclastic labour, there is the Wellington Statue at Hyde Park Corner, and other metropolitan monstrosities, that he might have sacrificed to his love of destruction, and not one of the general public would have stayed his hand or regretted the accomplishment of the deed. But to take the trouble to journey into the heart of Warwickshire—for we assume that he is not a local maniac—and destroy the one house in the whole world which is cherished in the hearts of every man in the three kingdoms, shows a malicious ingenuity of design that removes the act out of the category of impulsive crimes, and calls for the most signal punishment. It is the duty of Government at once to offer an ample reward for the apprehension of the offender; and we would suggest that the dull monotony of the punishment should be relieved by a periodical and public application of the horsewhip. The arrangements at Stratford-on-Avon, in the event of fire, are worthy of record. The conflagration raged for nearly an hour and a half, during which time about four gallons of water were passed in domestic pipkins for half a mile from the river Avon, and at the close of the disaster the one wretched engine of the place arrived upon the scene of action, drawn by the feeble hands of some eight or ten half-fed octogenarian paupers."

THE "DAILY NEWS"—*March 20th, 1857.*

"It is astonishing how small a loss, in a pecuniary sense, may be regarded in the light of a national calamity. When we are told of the destruction by fire of a small, old, mean house in a provincial town, we pass over the paragraph with scarcely a glance, but when we hear that that house was the birthplace of William Shakespeare, there is not a man in the three kingdoms who would not have given up a colony rather than the loss should have happened. A cold-blooded Manchester utilitarian may prove to us by the tables of an Insurance Company, or a house agent's valuation, that what we are weeping about was, after all, only bricks and mortar, that can be replaced at less than the price of an ordinary watch, but let us tell the mere political economist that there are greater things than are dreamed of in his philosophy. The great heart of the country

on an occasion like this is not to be solaced by an empty syllogism, or a slice of barren statistics. Gone at last is the one material link that bound us to the poet—the house that sheltered the infant head of the inspired child is now a melancholy heap of blackened ruins. If it has fallen a sacrifice to the morbid love of notoriety of some misguided villain, the mind trembles to think at what a cost that notoriety has been purchased. Better for him would it have been, when he comes to the bar of public opinion, if he had destroyed the richest palace in the land—even the ducal Chatsworth, with all its treasures of art and nature—rather than that one humble cottage in the town of Stratford-on-Avon.”

THE “MORNING ADVERTISER”—*March 21st, 1857.*

“How long will Englishmen sit patiently under the accursed tyranny of Papal aggression, and the snake-like, stealthy artfulness of slimy Jesuitism? Not content with placing the works of the immortal Shakespeare, in company with all that is good, and beautiful, and true, under the damning ban of the Index Expurgatorium, their insatiable thirst for conquest and hatred of freedom have led them to destroy the nest after trying to kill the bird—have led them to burn down Shakespeare’s house at Stratford-on-Avon. Before the faces of our suffering countrymen *we boldly accuse the emissaries of the Pope of this dastardly and heinous crime!*”

“REYNOLDS’S NEWSPAPER”—*March 21st, 1857.*

“The house of Shakespeare—the man of the people—poor and humble as it was, was not too poor and humble to excite the jealousy of a bloated aristocracy. It has been destroyed by some toadying lord of the manor, who wished to ingratiate himself with those miserable compounds of vice and meanness, whose royal eyes were constantly offended by seeing such a wretched hovel command more veneration than all their leprous palaces. The transparent farce of an inquest will be gone through, but when ground-down tenants compose the jury and tyrannical landlords the judges, it is not difficult to foresee the result.”

THE “ATHENÆUM”—*March 21st, 1857.*

“The public mind has been greatly shocked to hear that the house usually called Shakespeare’s, at Stratford-on-Avon, has been

destroyed by fire, and we shall, probably, offend many of our readers when we say that we are not sorry for it. It is at all times an unpopular and ungracious task to endeavour to dispel pleasing illusions and arrive at the prosaic truth, but it must be done. The man who first discovered that our patron saint, St. George, was a meat salesman at Marseilles, was not thanked for the discovery, but he was a public benefactor for all that. The evidence that William Shakespeare the dramatist was ever at Stratford-on-Avon *at all*—as we have before stated in this journal—(ante p. 418, p. 912, 1850), has always seemed to us of the most untrustworthy description. But that he was *born* in the town we most distinctly deny, and the length of time that this belief has obtained, and the strength of that belief are only fresh instances of that culpable indolence and negligence of editors—so called—who will take the most improbable and contradictory statements for granted rather than go into the next street to test their accuracy. Our space this week will not allow of our going into full details, but we may state that we have important documents in our possession proving incontestibly two things: first, that the *whole street* at Stratford-on-Avon, in which the house said to be William Shakespeare's birthplace stands, was built by a Birmingham contractor in 1693, or one hundred and twenty-nine years after Shakespeare is said to have come into existence; and secondly, that William Shakespeare the dramatist was born, lived, and died at Stratford in Essex, called by Chaucer "Strattforde-atte-Bowe."

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Some months have now elapsed since the deed was done; and the memory of it is now beginning to grow fainter in the public mind. A Government reward was offered, but the rain has nearly washed the placards from the walls, or they have been covered over by other announcements of the hour. I have never yet divulged who I am. That is a secret that will die with me.*

* Reprinted from the *Train Magazine*.

AN ADVERTISING MEDIUM.

I HAD a carriage to myself at starting. I looked up to the roof, and carried my eye along the walls of my prison. There were all my old tormentors. Doo Babby's Delicious Prevalenta—Epileptic Collars—No more Red Hair—The Registered Hottentôt—Pannas Cornium Boots—Emollio Coddle Soap—Supernatural Sherry—Fine Old Booby Port—and Sauce of prunella of the venerable Gravesend. We stopped at a small station, and by the aid of one lamp flickering in the night breeze I saw in gigantic letters on the walls the eternal waterproof Zephyr Garment and Paradise Shirt! I turned for relief to my "Railway Literature," and finding a thin strip of intellectual food done up between two thick slices of advertisement, I was seized with weariness and could not read. Shirts, sherries, soaps, boots, and wigs, were all swimming away in the glimmer of my solitary lamp, as the door opened, and something like a man encumbered with capes and rugs, portmanteaus, umbrellas, and walking-sticks, stepped in, and settled into the corner opposite.

"I beg your pardon," said he, "but have you any objection to my smoking a pipe of the Patent Pectoral Cough Mixture, Six Shillings a Pound?"

I did not object, but hinted that "Bye Laws"

were strict. He took off his travelling cap, which served at the same time as a tobacco-pouch, and to my astonishment, I perceived that while one-half of his hair was a raven black the other was totally gray. My scrutiny attracted his attention.

"You are struck by the peculiar appearance of my hair," he observed, filling the bowl of an earthenware pipe with the Pectoral Cough Mixture; "is it possible that you do not know me? My name is Posters, the inventor of Advertising Media."

"Oh!" I replied.

"You remember the celebrated 'Commercial Shirt,'" he continued; "Six for Forty Shillings? You have one on now. That shirt, sir, was mine!"

"Is it possible!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he continued in a musing tone, "it was a beautiful idea, it combined at once neatness with utility."

"Not being a commercial man," I observed, becoming interested, "I may, perhaps, be pardoned my ignorance; but I may inquire what peculiarity distinguished your invention from other shirts?"

"Certainly," he rapidly rejoined. "It was what is called an 'illustrated' shirt, and to adapt it for the mercantile classes, instead of the unmeaning and gaudy designs which this kind of vestment usually presents, my invention had a complete set of interest tables running up and down the front, calculating ten pounds to a thousand, from one day to twelve months, at five per cent., and presenting

an appearance, as I before observed, at once eminently neat and practically useful."

"Were you rewarded for your ingenuity?" I inquired.

"To my utmost wishes," he replied. "No amount of manufacturing activity could supply it fast enough. I think I made the remark at the time, in some of the public prints, that 'no merchant should be without it! It should be on every banker's back!'"

"Bless me!" I remarked, not knowing what else to say, "You *must* have been a happy man?"

"No, sir, far from it. I had a rival. A despicable imitator. My novelties were, of course, registered, and could not be infringed, but the poor, barren wretch, trod as closely upon the borders of my ideas as the law would permit him, and produced—What, think you?"

"A registered Ready Reckoner?" I suggested.

"No, sir, an Almanack Shirt for the current year! I now engaged with my antagonist in a fierce struggle for advertising pre-eminence. His activity was great, and so was mine. I bought the right of obtaining publicity in all the omnibuses; he secured all the turnpikes. He was before me with the steam-boat piers; but I succeeded in buying up all the bridges. He defeated me, however, on the railroads."

"Did he?" I said.

"Yes, sir, he did. With humiliation I confess it. I overlooked the importance of the railway

carriage as an advertising medium, and my opponent obtained the monopoly of all the leading lines. This was a great blow to me. Night after night did I consume the midnight oil—the best colza oil, eight shillings a gallon—trying to hit upon a plan for obtaining a greater publicity at a smaller cost.”

“Did you succeed?” I inquired.

“I did,” he replied. “My labour and patience were rewarded with an inspiration! I had it!—Yes, sir, was it not a sublime idea? I would stamp every coin which came, or could be brought into my possession, and would send them forth again into the world to trumpet my garment from the Land’s End to the Orkneys.”

Here my excited companion, having finished his narrative, applied himself to his pipe with great vehemence.

“Yours is, indeed,” I observed, “a strange and interesting account of commercial enterprise and vicissitudes. Will you consider me impertinent in asking if the public is indebted to you for any of the popular articles of the present day:—‘The Shirt of Paradise,’ ‘The Rose-water Sniphonia,’ ‘The Incometaxridian Trouser,’ or any other trade riddle of London?”

“It is not,” he replied. “All my talent and energy are now devoted to the cultivation of the science of advertising for the benefit of enterprising and ‘registering’ traders.”

“It *is* a science,” I remarked, “without doubt.”

“It is,” he replied, “a wonderful—a noble

science. It is the Jesuitism of the nineteenth century ; and I may remark to you, in confidence, that you behold before you the Loyola of the system ! If your own father approves of the marmalade, or the potted anchovies, at your breakfast table, take his opinion with care : I do not say he *is*, but he *may* be one of my emissaries !”

“ This is a tremendous power to wield, sir !” I said.

“ It is. We have our training college, from which the youth of both sexes—and even children—are sent into the world to act their part in this wonderful system. In no society are you free from it. It penetrates into the palace and the cottage ; the haunts of pleasure and the marts of business.”

“ Is it possible ?” I said. “ You amaze me !”

“ I,” he continued, “ am the great archetype of my class—the class of my creation—the living, moving, ubiquitous, advertising medium. My free conversation with you is a luxury I have not indulged in for years. My speech is studiously framed to introduce into notice each and every article which trading ingenuity wishes to force into public estimation.”

At this juncture of my fellow-traveller’s discourse, I felt a sharp sensation of pain where I was sitting, as if several pins were pricking me. I made an involuntary movement which at once attracted the attention of my companion.

“ Ah !” he quickly observed, “ I know the cause ;

it is my 'Placard Indicator,'—you turn, of course, to examine the seat."

I naturally did so, before he directed me, and found several small, sharp, projecting pegs, each surrounded by an adhesive ticket exhorting me to buy the Ointment of the Druids, sold in boxes at three and sixpence!

"Another of my inventions, sir," he observed, "for stimulating the attention and directing the public eye to what would otherwise be an unfavourable position for an advertisement.—A trifle thrown off in a happy moment!"

I resumed my seat in silence, taking the precaution to cover the "Placard Indicator" with the substantial folds of my railway rug. My companion coolly continued as if nothing had happened.

"If there is one branch of my profession that I pursue with enthusiasm, it is the organization of introductions."

"What may that be?" I inquired.

"It is the bringing together of persons," he replied, who require a little assistance in the way of publicity. It is the marriage of Advertising. A most interesting case of this description lately came under my management—quite a love match, sir, I assure you. The contracting parties were M. Alexis Top Sawyer the celebrated cook, and Highson, jun., the "importer of colonial produce." The one has a cheap cooking-book to sell; the other a peculiarly fragrant coffee. Top Sawyer states in his volume that having purchased a canister of Highson Junior's

“Patent Aromatic Coffee, roasted by steam power,” etc. etc., he was delighted to find upon testing it that it far surpassed any coffee that he had ever tasted! He had been, he said, in the cafés of Germany and France, the luxurious divans of Stamboul and sunny Italy, but never had his fastidious and highly-trained palate been so gratified as by the inimitable coffee of Highson Junior, sold in canisters at one and sixpence. On the other hand, Highson Junior has read Top Sawyer’s book with a degree of pleasure he can hardly find words to express. Here indeed is a benefactor to his species. No longer is there any reason why the savoury ragoût and the delicate omelette should continue to be strangers at the board of the humble classes. Ude, Kitchener, Acton, were all very well in their way; but they addressed themselves exclusively to the aristocracy. Top Sawyer is pre-eminently the cook of the people. So impressed is the enterprising Highson with these facts that, rather than Top Sawyer’s book should be restricted in its circulation, he himself would give a free copy to every purchaser of—say six pounds of the steam-roasted coffee in canisters at one shilling and sixpence. Isn’t this delightful, sir, isn’t it human nature?”

“It is, indeed,” I meekly replied, beginning to have a very poor opinion of my fellow-creatures.

“To return to myself,” continued my companion, “what I appear to you mentally and morally, that also am I physically,—an Advertising Medium.

“I appear in nothing, I possess nothing, but what has a purpose—the dissemination of commercial ideas. You observed the extraordinary appearance of my hair—one half gray, the other jet black. Time turned it gray, the “Timbuctoo Lotion” made it what it is. Allow me to present you with a card of particulars. My teeth are false, patent, registered; with a lever movement, compensation balance, jewelled in eight holes.”

To my surprise, while he spoke, he wrenched the whole set out of his jaws, passed them rapidly before me, and deposited them upon the seat beside him.

“False teeth,” he calmly continued, “possess this advantage at the dinner table: they do not impose upon their owner the necessity of picking them. You simply unscrew the set, hand them to the servant, who removes all stringy impediments, and returns them to you fresh cleansed for the second course. I have much pleasure in introducing you to the maker. Take a card. My eyes, sir, are equally false, and equally good.”

He “gouged” them out for my inspection! I made a side movement towards the door, and had thoughts of casting myself from the carriage. There were the two eyes glaring at me from the floor, and the “Medium” sitting before me with empty sockets!

“They are also a patent article,” he continued in a tone grown more sepulchral, “take a card. Do you use artificial flesh?” he inquired, picking a handful out of his cheek, and pulling off his nose like a

pantomimic mask. "It is exceedingly warm and comfortable to wear, and always preserves the freshness of youth. Try this specimen; it is beautifully soft."

As he spoke he forced the clammy product into my reluctant hand. I looked at it for a moment with loathing not unmixed with curiosity, then returned it to my eccentric companion.

"Take a card," said he, placing the artificial flesh on the seat by the side of the teeth, "you may want it some day."

He then unscrewed his left arm at the shoulder, and having taken it out of the socket, presented it tenderly to my view, as if it had been a young child.

"It has all the latest improvements," he observed; "delicacy of touch, gracefulness, pliability, and strength. Warranted to stand any climate. The price is not unreasonable: take a card."

How long this ghastly mode of showing ghastly samples would have continued I cannot tell, for to my great relief we were interrupted here by certain signs that our train was approaching the London terminus. This seemed to produce in the "medium's" mind a sudden recollection. He rushed to the window, dragging me after him with his one arm.

"There!" he exclaimed, in a tone of exultation, directing my attention to a gigantic luminous object which shone brightly through the night mist—"look at that, and confess that human ingenuity can go no further. I have nothing greater to show you." He ceased; and I fixed my gaze in the direction he

indicated. As we approached nearer, the luminous mass developed into St. Paul's Cathedral, with the dome rendered completely transparent, and strongly lighted from the interior, and on it in large and brilliant letters were these words, discernible for miles, "Try the Commercial Shirt; Six for Forty Shillings."

While I was wrapped in mingled feelings of astonishment and admiration at this novel sight there came a crash! Whether it was coal trucks, luggage trains, collision, or what not, I cannot tell. I find myself in a bed at some hotel. I suspect I have been here some time. What seems to me very remarkable is, that when I make any inquiries respecting the strange traveller they give me something to send me to sleep!*

* Reprinted from the *Train Magazine*.

COMMON WAYS.

STREET MEMORIES.

It matters not much what I am now. I may be the chairman of the Balls Pond Mining and Quartz Crushing Company (Limited); I may be the governor of the United Banks of Shetland and Tierra del Fuego, or any other incarnation of intense respectability and supreme authority; but one thing is certain—I was once a boy. If some of my City friends will condescend to throw aside that stiff mask which they wear from nine to five, and that other equally stiff but very genteel mask which they wear to the west of Temple Bar, from five to twelve, I will take them kindly and naturally by the button-hole, and tell them, to the best of my ability, what kind of a boy I was; what I did; what I liked; and what I disliked.

I was decidedly a street-boy; and perhaps a sharp boy. I was allowed to walk about for the benefit of my health; because, when I went to school, I caught the hooping-cough, the scarlet fever, the chicken-pox, and the measles. These calamities procured me freedom of action, with a certain amount of pocket-money. I knew every street-tumbler as well as my own father. I knew the thin youth in the white leggings, who did the splits equal to any acrobat in Europe; and the

stout posturer in pink leggings, who was always striking an attitude of menace towards his partner, and who threw a hand-spring, two flip-flaps, and a back-summersault without the aid of a spring-board. I knew the man with the brass balls, the rings, the doll; and the little boy who used to wriggle through the spokes of the ladder while it was being balanced on his father's chin. If any boy got a blow with the balls which were swung at the end of a rope to clear the ring, I was that boy; but, to show that I bore no malice, I used to be the first to volunteer to enter the circle when a lad was required to have his head cut off. I used to stand by the side of the man with the drum, watching the artistic touches that he gave to the instrument, and listening to the delicate light and shade which he imparted to his performance on the mouth-organ. I believe, now I have come to reflect, at a mature age, that I must have been present on the last occasion when a live donkey was balanced on the top of a ladder resting on a man's chin. All went well for a few minutes, when a slight impatient movement of the quadruped caused the ladder to incline, and the performer, after vainly trying to restore its perpendicular, was compelled to let it go, and the animal fell with a crash through a cheesemonger's window. The donkey was not killed, but the whole troupe were taken to the station-house; and a new police regulation forbade any such performance in future. An aunt of mine declared that it was a judgment upon the cheesemonger (who used to serve her) for the

reckless manner in which he bought and used waste-paper, without any regard to what it had been in its bound and printed form.

I knew the group of children upon stilts, but I never took kindly to them. They were more calculated to interest those well-regulated boys who were never allowed to see any of the sights I have mentioned, except from the safe paternal fastness of a bed-room window. But I mixed with the wild throng, learned their habits, their prospects, and their rounds, and nearly always knew the hour, the day, and the place at which to expect them. I was familiar with the street bands that played at public-house doors; I even knew their little loves and hatreds. I have seen an harmonious partnership broken up, and the piccolo and the violoncello refuse to work any longer with the bugle (there were bugles in those days) and the violin. I have even seen the bugle out by himself, doing a very good solo business in a thick marketing street like Shoreditch, on a Saturday night. I have often seen the trombone very drunk and incapable; and an old fellow with red, blown-out cheeks, extremely vain about his manner of executing the Last Rose of Summer on a cracked clarionet.

Many a time have I stood with untiring patience outside a public-house for several hours, when I saw the familiar machine standing at the door, with its drapery tucked up, waiting for the proprietor to come out after dinner flushed with beer. When a "pitch" took place, how I used to watch

the windows of the substantial houses, to see if any smiling nursemaids, with delighted children, made their appearance, backed by the paper of half-pence from the benevolent parents, without which and the general encouragement of the crowd, I knew, from long experience, no performance would take place. The fantoccini I pronounced to be a bore, a something only to be endured if nothing better was to be had. The idiotic Turk who threw up two orange-looking balls, first one and then the other, no more excited my interest than did the skeleton that danced and fell to pieces produce in me a feeling of wonder and admiration. The young lady in the short light frock and soiled stockings, who used to dance upon the slack-wire, waving first two flags, and afterwards playing upon a pair of cymbals, inspired me with almost a tender passion. I used to watch anxiously for her days of appearance, and I always felt very jealous of the man who accompanied her in the capacity of guardian and money-taker.

The showman who carried in a box upon his back, the dramas of Mazeppa and the Wild Horse, and Jonathan Bradford, was another object of interest. His entertainment was exclusive, and only to be enjoyed by the possessor of one halfpenny. I used to see it as often as I could afford it, standing on a step in front and looking through the bull's-eye glasses. The interior was lighted up with a candle in the middle of the day, and the different highly-coloured tableaux were let down with a heavy

flop by strings at the side. Mazeppa was dragged across the stage on a wooden slide; wonderful atmospheric effects were introduced at the back, by lifting a lid, and the whole was made more interesting by a running description pronounced in a thick voice by the proprietor, who was always suffering from a cold in the head through exposure to the weather. My experience out-of-doors gave a tone to my conduct at home. Mazeppa was got up inside a band-box with tolerable success; I broke a great number of plates and saucers trying to spin them on the top of walking-sticks in imitation of the juggler; and my experiments upon the bed, trying to achieve the feat of a back-summersault, were carried out to the utter destruction of the sacking. The introduction of Jim Crow as a character-song was fatal to more than one tolerable suit of clothes. I blacked my face three times a-day; I destroyed one of my father's best hats, making the crown hang down like the lid of a snuff-box; and I made ragged the sleeves and tails of a coat, and covered with patches a pair of very wearable trousers.

I was not a gluttonous boy, but constant exercise and exposure to the air had given me a good appetite, and I liked to eat. I was fairly supplied with pocket-money, and I was also lucky in finding small sums. I once found three-and-sixpence; I once found one-and-twopence; and once sixpence, a pen-knife, and a bit of sealing-wax. I was not altogether devoted to the lighter delicacies of the palate. I knew the different flavours of cheese-

cakes, Banbury tarts, and three-cornered jam tartlets. I knew how much more was to be got for a penny when I bought the stale pastry from the tea-tray placed at the side of the doorway. I knew exactly how far a pennyworth of pieces would fill my cap. I knew all this; and it was not, therefore, ignorance but choice that often sent me to the more substantial viands of the cookshop. Good, greasy Yorkshire pudding was a favourite, sometimes plain, sometimes with an occasional raisin stuck at rare intervals on the surface—always on the surface. Next to this stood baked potatoes, brown and crisp; and, after this, peas-pudding, in warm and heavy lumps upon a cabbage-leaf. My regular shop used to cook twice a-day; once at twelve in the morning, and again at eight in the evening. No delicacy that I could have had at home was half so choice in my eyes as these penny-worths of pudding and potatoes, bought amidst a crowd of cabmen, carters, and coalheavers, and dirty women receiving their dinners and suppers in yellow basins—meat, pudding, greens, potatoes, gravy, and mustard, all mixed up together.

The places that I loved to patronize most were the stalls. There was a pieman who sold kidney puddings of a most delicious flavour—at least I thought so then—and he had the field to himself for many months. But, at last, capital and enterprise came in competition with him, in the shape of a rival pieman, who professed to sell kidney puddings superior to pieman number One, at two-thirds

of his price. Thereupon, pieman number One stuck up a large paper lanthorn on his staff, on which was written in sufficiently legible characters, "The original inventor of the kidney puddings." This had the desired effect with the majority of boys, who were very bad political economists, and liked to buy in the oldest, rather than the cheapest market. At least, I judge by myself and companions, for we stuck to the inventor nobly through his troubles, until his dastardly opponent was driven ignominiously from the field.

There were hundreds of fruit-stalls, but I never dealt with any but one, kept by an old lady, who was a widow, and wore what I afterwards learned was a widow's cap. She sold ribstone pippins, two for a penny; little red apples, several seasons old, four for a penny; hard Brazil nuts, that punished your teeth fearfully to crack them, and, sometimes, would not give in, except under the heel of the boot; she sold, occasionally, curds and whey ladled out into a saucer with a clean, broad shell; and she sold slices of sweet cocoa-nut. In the winter-time, she had a chimney-pot pan, with holes in it, full of burning charcoal, at which she warmed her hands and roasted chesnuts. She had an exceedingly almshouse-resident appearance, as she sat in an old hall-porter's leather chair, with an old bonnet that came over her face, and a well-darned brown cloak that reached to her feet. She suffered much in the cold weather, from chilblains and rheumatism; and, sometimes, her place was taken for many days by a

young woman, her daughter, who did not give so much satisfaction as the old lady, by reason of her being less liberal to the customers myself in particular.

The long winter over, the old lady came back, neat and clean as ever, and was happy and comfortable enough, knitting her worsted stockings, and serving the hungry, ever-craving, juvenile public through the long summer days. In wet weather, she used to shift her stall under a gateway, by the leave of the proprietor, and in that position defied the fury of the elements. If any one had proposed to entice me away from the widow's stall by any inducement, such as selling me four apples for a penny, instead of two, do you suppose, for a moment, that I should have gone? Certainly not. I am proud to say that certain insidious attempts of the kind were made by an adjacent Irishwoman, and that I nobly resisted them all.

An old man, who might have been the husband that the old fruit-stall keeper had lost, was another of my open-air tradespeople, that I patronized with undeviating regularity. He sold a very warm, spicy, sweet, dark, comforting mixture that he called Elder Wine. It was one penny a glass along with a rusk; and I think the proudest day of my life was, when, in consideration of my long custom, I was promoted to have two rusks for my penny instead of one, and a rather larger glass. I used to delight in taking other boys, and showing them the importance in which I was held by the Elder Wine merchant;

using my influence to get them a share of my privileges ; and exerting myself, as children of a larger growth exert themselves, to procure for each other opera-boxes and admissions to exclusive fêtes. The spirit of the beadle is in us from our cradles.

My sweetstuff stall-keeper was a person of less generous impulses and pliable material, which I attributed to the fact of his keeping a small gambling machine called a dolly, and to the hardening effect which the dolly had upon his mind. The toffy was delicious, the hardbake hard, as bake should be, and prodigiously full of almonds ; the horehound and almond-rock were luscious in the extreme, and everything would have been delightful, but for the baneful influence of the dolly. Often have I hesitated an hour, walking backwards and forwards, as to whether I should purchase my sweetstuff in the regular way, getting a pennyworth for a penny, or should throw the marble down the interior of the dolly, running the risk of getting a high number, or a low one, in the dish, and receiving two pennyworth for my penny, or nothing at all. The demon of gambling generally triumphed, and success was mostly on the side of the proprietor of the dolly ; who, when I lost, used considerately to present me with a single brandy-ball to comfort me under my defeat.

An object of almost superstitious veneration was that splendid triumph of machinery, a first-class potato-can. Bright block-tin that you could see your face in, neatly bordered with rims of shining

brass; two funnels always ejecting steam, and four lamps to light up the stately fabric by night; a box at the side to contain the butter; and two wells in which were always baking two hundred of the finest potatoes. Is it to be wondered at that I yielded myself to the fascination of this street Crystal Palace of my childhood? Add to all this the almost superhuman manipulative dexterity of the proprietor, who picked out, divided, buttered, salted, and delivered into your hands, a couple of the smoking luxuries before the order had scarcely left your mouth; and I think I cannot be blamed for lingering with feelings of envy and admiration as I watched the rapid, skilful operation, and thought it a proper ambition to look forward to being the owner of such a machine, able to conduct it in a similar business-like manner.

An almost equal interest attached to the opening of oysters at the neighbouring fish-stall; but the operator's hands were wet, chapped, cold, and raw, and the general aspect of the whole stall, with its dirty proprietor, its pickled whelks in small saucers, its stewed eels in a large jar, and its strong-smelling flickering oil-lamp, only served to increase by contrast the air of warmth, cleanliness, comfort, and magnificence, that hovered about the palatial potato-can.

The only thing, in my eye, that ever approached the potato-can, was the fountain that gave forth ginger-beer with such inexhaustible frothy prodigality. There was less beauty and more science

about this, but it only stood second in my affections. Mixed in with, and variegating my line of stalls, were sound umbrellas for a shilling, walking-sticks arranged in rows against the walls, birds hopping about for sale in small green-painted cages, bright showy flowers making up for a want of root by huge globular bases of wet clay, and several large clothes-horses full of fluttering songs, both comic and sentimental, printed on the thinnest of paper, and illustrated in the rudest of styles; all of which things I, of course, bought at one time or another.

Then there were strong appeals to charity, like that of the man without legs, who sat by the side of an awful picture of a factory accident (kept down on the pavement by a couple of brickbats), in which he was represented as being hurled round by an impossible combination of machinery, and losing more blood than was ever contained in the bodies of six such sturdy cripples. Then there was a quiet, ingenious, middle-aged man, who, every day of the week (weather permitting), was constantly employed, from nine o'clock until six, writing the Lord's Prayer on the lids of very small pill-boxes. He never spoke to the little crowd, gathered round him; but pursued his task as if he had been in the privacy of his study. He was a mystery to me, that I was never able to clear up. Close to this placid artist was an individual of a very different character, who, from morn to dewy eve, kept continually greasing the collars of willing boys with

candle-ends, and immediately removing the marks with small green cakes of some composition, which he sold at a penny each ; keeping up all the while, with unflagging volubility, a running eulogium upon the many virtues and uses of his article. I need not say that my jacket was greased and recleansed on the average once a-day. Then there was a venerable, bearded, oriental, Turkish-looking gentleman, who stood bolt upright in the gutter selling snuff-coloured cakes of medicine called rhubarb, and who, like the Lord's Prayer penman, relied for patronage upon an impressive silence. In strong contrast to this silent gentlemen were the two talkative benefactors of their species, who sold respectively corn-salve and ginger to cure the toothache. The man with the ginger had a soft mumbling tone of voice, caused by his mouth being always well supplied with his specific remedy. He had also a curious way of working his face about, and rolling the ginger over his tongue to indicate great facility of movement, and to illustrate the truth of what he was constantly stating somewhat in these words : "If you will apply a portion of the root to the gum when it feels troublesome, it will remove the pain, and render the mouth easy and pliable." The proprietor of the corn-salve was much more obtrusive, and although his pronunciation was less affectedly correct than that of his companion, there was more of it, and it was more amusing. Any time between nine and dusk, he used to stand there, holding a small box of the salve in his hand, and giving utter-

ance to the following short descriptive lecture :
“ This is the unrivalled corn-salve that will cure any corn or bunion : it will cure a watery bunion ! It is extracted from a 'undred different wild Arabs (meaning herbs), the colewort, the ivy, the stinging nettle, and the common snail that creeps upon the grass that grows in the fields. The snail, my friends, is of an ily, slimy, poo-erful, and penetratin' natur', and perfectly calcerated to thoroughly eradicate the disease of the corn at the second dressin' ! If it does not do so I will forfeit all the stuff I've got upon the board.”

Most of these men, with all their humours and their failings, have now passed from a world in which they had a hard struggle to live. If I have recalled them from their resting-places, it has been in no unkind spirit that I have done so, but simply because I think it is good sometimes to go back out of the din and turmoil of the present, and to try, if only vainly, to be for a few moments again a boy.

UMBRELLAS.

SITTING at my chamber window watching the leaping rain-drops springing from the swollen puddles—watching the steamy-windowed omnibus with its stooping, shiny-caped driver and independent, mournful, head-shaking conductor—watching the clean-washed pavement smoking over the bake-house ovens—watching the rolling glossy cabs and the struggling, soaked, and weather-beaten foot-passengers—is it to be marvelled at that my thoughts linger upon umbrellas? Amongst the dwellers in this great city—not that few who look upon their fellow-creatures from the glowing interior of the yellow chariot or the compact brougham, but that many to whom even the hack-cab is a rare luxury, and the omnibus an uncertain convenience—this humble instrument is cherished as a street god—a companion—a something to hold silent communion with—an appendage which, like a dog or a walking-stick, is modified by the character of its owner, while it becomes, at the same time, part of his system, exerting an influence over him equal to what it receives. Solitary men who take long constitutional walks to the commons round London, or loiter home in the cool of the evening from quiet offices under Government, carry umbrellas as com-

panions, and not as instruments to protect them from the rain. The old play-goer, whose memory extends over the traditions of fifty years, who can tell how many waistcoats every actor used to take off who has played the first grave-digger in Hamlet for the last half-century, fights his way to his familiar seat in the pit—always in the pit—accompanied by an umbrella of substantial dimensions, upon which he leans in deep attention, sucking the handle as he mutters to it his opinions of the performance. His umbrella has been his constant companion all these years; and although change and decay have come to it, as to its master, in the common course of things, a new covering confers upon it every now and then the gift of perpetual youth, while the old play-goer sinks gradually without any such power of restoration.

Setting aside the dry utilitarian, who carries his umbrella as he would a macintosh, or an oil-skin suit—for use, and nothing more—there is a number of men whom you may identify by their umbrellas, as you may identify others by their watches, their watch-seals, or their snuff-boxes.

There is my nervous friend, my timid friend, my friend who is sadly wanting in self-possession. He enters my chambers silently in soppy goloshes on a rainy day, with a dripping abomination which he will not put in the place appointed for the reception of umbrellas. He brings it through the mass of horrified clerks into my best official room; he places it against the wall, but before he can

commence his business, the ill-constructed nuisance opens with a burst and a splutter, and falls helplessly in the little pool which it has deposited on the carpet. He picks it up, and places it once more hurriedly yet tenderly against the wall; but it still persists in falling on the floor, with a grating noise against the wainscot. Again my nervous friend puts it in a position of safety, and it is not until he has again settled down in a chair, to return to the object of his visit, that he discovers a valuable piece of polished furniture likely to be seriously injured by the close companionship of the dripping abomination. By the time that he has finally determined to his satisfaction that the only place for a wet umbrella in such a room is inside the fender, a smell of burning discomposes him once more, and his mind is rendered totally unfit to entertain business for the day.

Then there is my forgetful friend, my friend with the weak memory, my friend who can never tell exactly whether he has lost his ring, or whether he has left it on his dressing-table. He is constantly haunted by the idea that he has left an umbrella somewhere. When you think you have got rid of him for the day, his familiar voice is heard in the outer room, and his head is thrust in at the inner door, asking in familiar tones the familiar question, "Did I leave an umbrella behind me just now?" Then comes the production of every umbrella in the place for him to examine carefully, and endeavour, if possible, to identify

the lost one. Then comes his not very graphic description of his umbrella; its peculiarities of appearance, especially its very curious and striking handle; and his very lengthy and vague account of the places he had visited that day, and the most likely shop, club-house, or vehicle in which he had left it. I meet him sometimes full in the street, and I see him stop suddenly, hesitate, scratch his chin, and then walk a short distance back in an undecided manner; the suspicion having just crossed his mind that he has lost his umbrella. When my forgetful friend pays me another visit, after the trouble that he put me to in searching for a phantom of his brain, I am amused by his quiet statement that the supposed lost umbrella was resting calmly at home in its accustomed corner, covered with the idle dust of many weeks' inactivity. All men have their uses: and I fully believe that the mission of my forgetful friend, and others of his class, is to increase the scanty salaries of cabmen by providing them with a constant supply of their regular and rightful perquisites—lost umbrellas.

Then there is my extremely neat and buckish friend, my friend who has converted the umbrella into one of the leading elegancies of life. His protector from the rain is not a half-collapsed balloon—oh no!—it is a walking-stick, lightly wrapped in silk. And such a walking-stick! made of shining partridge cane, with a gold tassel-hole, an onyx-knobbed handle, gold-mounted, and covered with bright-green silk—together, a highly artistic production.

It is a pleasant sight to see my neat and buckish friend in a very clean omnibus, with his patent boots, and his tightly gloved hands placidly clasped across the elegant handle of his umbrella, which he holds between his knees. Compare his almost tame refinement and gentleness with the coarse roughness of his opposite neighbour, from the country, who looks upon the umbrella as a part of the serious business of life—a thing not to be trifled with, or embroidered with anything like foppery. My rural friend's protector from the rain might have been constructed from the sails of an old coal barge, so rough and weather-beaten is it, stained with mud and clay collected in tramping up that four-mile country lane which leads from the village to the railway station. The stick is like a small mast, surmounted by a brown knob as large as an orange, upon which are clasped two fat, red speckled hands with short, brown, walnut-picking looking nails. What a wide impassable gulf there is between my rural friend and my buckish friend,—and between their attendant umbrellas!

Then there is my puffy, irascible friend, my friend with the fat red face and the small pig's eyes, but, more particularly, with the substantial well-to-do looking umbrella, which is, at one and the same time, a protection to its owner and an implement of warfare against the whole world besides. Vagrant dogs look at it with knowing horror; and jaunty, impudent errand-boys become respectable within the magic circle of its action. Many a time has it come down upon the back of the offending qua-

draped and the shielding basket of the impertinent butcher's boy. Usually it is carried under the arm of its owner, at an angle of elevation troublesome, if not dangerous, to the passers-by. When my puffy friend enters an omnibus, he carries his umbrella before him, like a warrior charging a fortress, to the great discomfort of the occupants. If it is wet he puts it in the way of his companions; if it is dry he strikes the unfortunate conductor so forcibly with it across the wrist, when any person wishes to alight, that the victim of imperfect mechanical arrangements looks seriously to see if any bones are broken. Remonstrance with my irascible friend only produces in him such an appearance of apoplexy, that it is a charity to desist from further complaint.

Then there is my aged friend, my Corinthian friend—my friend who is not aware of any change in manners and costume since Tom and Jerry were rollicking boys upon town, and the finest gentleman in Europe sat upon the throne of England. My Corinthian friend is not aware that a long frock-coat with fur collar and lappets, and a low-crowned, broad-topped, curly-rimmed hat, are rather behind the style of the present day; or, if he has the slightest suspicion of the fact, he waits patiently in the full belief that the giddy, fickle world will gladly come back to the old real fashion in due time. His umbrella is made after a pattern that must have descended direct from Jonas Hanway, who is said to have been the bold introducer of these defenders

from rain, towards the middle of the last century. The umbrella of my Corinthian friend is baggy from the ferule upwards, green in colour, edged with white, cotton in material, tightened in towards the top with a great brass ring (like the short-waisted ladies of the period), bamboo-sticked, and surmounted with a large ivory clenched hand. In a corner of the coffee-room, where my Corinthian friend takes his ease, it stands in a defiant attitude, seeming to shake its fist at any of the company who dare to be more modern than its master. In contrast to this umbrella stands another, belonging to an equally antique owner, the meekness of which has a strange fascination in my eyes. It is green and baggy, like its companion; but instead of the defiant clasped fist, it has a bird-beaked handle of the mildest aspect, the brass hole for the tassel (which is not there) acting as an eye. I look at it until I fancy it is alive, and I am almost betrayed into the absurdity of uttering some audible term of endearment suitable to a bird.

Then there is my sturdy, independent, old lady friend, who firmly fastened underneath an umbrella of gig proportions, pays what I may call a periodical visitation to the City, to see her stockbroker, or receive her dividends. I call her visit a visitation, because (supposing the day to be wet) her course is marked by a crowd of indignant foot-passengers scattered right and left along the line of her progress. Some make loud remonstrance with their tongues, while others, I am sorry to say, when the

first attack of astonishment is over, attempt to rally and strike the offending stockholder to the ground. Regardless of abuse, regardless of blows, the single-minded old lady pushes on her way through the crowded citizens, who are compelled to fall back as she advances, strong in the strength of an implement that was made for rougher work. In the management of the umbrella she fairly represents the general body of walking ladies, and there has been no hope of her ever riding in a public vehicle, since that fatal day when the evil genius of an omnibus-conductor prompted him to overcharge her sixpence sterling.

Sometimes, flitting across Leicester Square and suddenly disappearing in one of the murky streets of Soho, I fancy I have seen the purple pickled-cabbage coloured *parapluie* of the French *grisette*; and I know that I have seen the light, bright-blue umbrella of a boulevard exquisite, temporarily exiled from his native land. Sometimes I fancy when I see a gentlemanly man entering a cab with a very shabby umbrella, that he must have borrowed it at night to go home from a party, when no conveyance was to be had; and that it proved to be such a disgraceful spectacle, when exposed to the light of day, that he is compelled to hire a carriage to return it to the owner. I have suffered—oh, how I have suffered!—from the joke about the best umbrellas always going first. Whether I am destined to be more unfortunate than my fellow-creatures I cannot tell; but I never venture out, either in public or private

circles, without having that mouldy pleasantry dinned into my ear. I have sometimes weakly taken the Vicar of Wakefield's advice, and endeavoured to rid myself of troublesome acquaintances, by lending them umbrellas, bought for the purpose in Tottenham Court Road on a Saturday night, and warranted sound, at a shilling a-piece. I have, in all such experiments, been miserably deceived; the umbrellas, it is true, do not return, but the acquaintances invariably do.

In my wanderings about town, my eyes have been once, and once only, regaled with the sight of a real drover picking his way gingerly through the mud, as he guided his sheep to their destined slaughter-house, and holding an umbrella over his head to protect him from the rain. He must have been a gentleman who had seen better days, or a descendant of the Gentle Shepherd.

Long have I watched for, but never have I seen, a real salt-water sailor with an umbrella. Many things that pertain solely to the earth he buys, but never an umbrella. I have seen naval men occasionally with such things, but they have been stout, respectable, retired skippers, who have saved money, and gone into the ship-chandler line.

Sometimes, as I watch the clerks wending homewards from the City, I fancy that I can tell from their umbrellas more than anything else—which are the married men and which the single ones; which the free, unfettered young loungers about town, and which the struggling fathers of families. Some-

times, on a wet night, after being dazzled with the gorgeous pageantry of a theatrical spectacle, I have a strange fancy for wandering round to that dingy back street, where the stage-door is always situated, and under the dilapidated umbrella of some thin, meek, shivering, hurrying man trying to trace the proud lineaments of that stern monarch, who, a few minutes before, had lorded it magnificently over his fellow-creatures.

Sometimes, when I pay a morning visit at the family mansion of Mr. Midas (late of the Stock Exchange), I find an old rotten pair of goloshes, and a frail, handless umbrella, standing in the hall. They belong to a poor widow who walks miles in the wet to teach the young ladies music. Once she was waited upon herself, before her husband (Mr. Midas's late partner) failed, and shot himself one morning in his bed-room. I have never seen her face; but I have often seen her umbrella's, and it tells her story.

FETISHES AT HOME.

I THINK, if my memory serves me rightly, that in some parts of Africa—no matter where—there exists, or did exist, a curious tribe of people whom we, in our superior wisdom, consider heathen fanatics, and whom we, in our superior language, term fetish worshippers. I am not going, in this paper, and especially in this book, to enter upon a short history of creeds and persuasions—to hold the balance between east, west, north, and south ; to say which is the most preferable or the least repulsive form of worship, to discuss the doctrine of symbols, or to propose any plan for the spiritual amelioration of the untutored savage. I am merely about to describe a term, perhaps not generally understood, for the reason that I am going to apply it to many things in my own country, and to many persons amongst my own countrymen.

These curious people, then, the fetish worshippers, are in the habit of attaching an extraordinary importance, if not a superstitious veneration, to articles of the most common-place and homely description. A piece of looking-glass, an old tobacco-pipe, or a dirty blacking-bottle, left, possibly, by some artful sailor in exchange for a bargeful of native fruits, becomes the household god—the idol

—the fetish of its simple possessor, to be defended with his life, to be preserved religiously under every vicissitude of fortune. If any visitor to the wigwam of that untutored savage should break, destroy, or otherwise damage that household god, or fetish, then is there war from that moment between the two men. If the visitor or the visitee be of sufficient importance in his own country to raise a general tumult, then is the quarrel taken up by the whole tribes of the respective men; and dwellers afar off on the banks of one of the mighty native rivers know that somewhere in the land there is war to the knife, when they rise of a morning and find the deep waters rushing by coloured with human blood.

I am not, of course, prepared to go so far as to attempt a comparison in every particular between these fetish worshippers of barbarism and the fetish worshippers of civilization, who exist in fruitful abundance around me. The wholesome restraining provisions of a somewhat severe criminal law have not been without their effect in curbing the natural impulses of my countrymen. I fancy that I have noticed a savage glare in the eye of my Lady Poodlecraft when I have trodden upon the delicate toes of her Italian fetish greyhound, and a fierce grinding of the false teeth of old Miss Paroquet when I have ousted her favourite fetish cat from his comfortable seat upon the hearth-rug; and I cannot help thinking that these passive exhibitions of anger would have developed into something like active barbarian mischief but for the calm and refining in-

fluence of education, and the knowledge that there was a police-station round the corner with Newgate looming in the distance.

Not less dangerous, but for these restraints, would be my middle-aged, retired tradesman, fetish worshipper, who lives in a fetish villa protected by high walls, spring-guns, broken glass, iron spikes, and other civilized fortifications of domestic privacy. If there is any point about his fetish that he worships more than another, it is the gravel-walk, clean, tight, firm, and swept like a carpet, leading from the gateway to the dwelling-house door. Twice has he been fined two pounds and costs before a local magistrate (the last time with a caution from the bench) for violently assaulting a butcher and a baker who dared to desecrate his fetish pathway by leaving their heavy footprints in the yielding gravel. Another fetish connected with his habitation is the grass-plot before the windows; and if any bold man wishes to try to the utmost the strength of educational and legal bonds, in checking the natural barbarian impulses that smoulder within the breast of this civilized worshipper, let him trample upon this piece of sacred verdure, and he shall find it like stamping upon the tail of a slumbering crocodile.

Another fetish worshipper of the same class is Miss Soapdragon, a paragon of cleanliness. Her fetishes are a spotless door-step, an unsoiled passage, and virgin whity-brown painted wainscoting as pure as marble. Leave a muddy footprint upon

the door-step or the floor-cloth, or the mark of a black kid glove of imperfect dye near the handle of the dining-room door, and bid adieu for ever to thy old and faithful friend, poor Soapdragon of the Treasury, for never shalt thou see him more under his own roof. Call about the time when you know he must be trying to make himself comfortable in the only room—a sort of housekeeper's pantry—allowed by Mrs. S. for general use in their rather extensive mansion, and the servant will come tripping down the pathway to the outer gate, which is always kept locked, with “mistress's compliments, and master is not at home.” In vain you ask if anything serious can have happened to divert the usually monotonously-regular Soapdragon from the very even tenor of his way; you can get but one answer from the faithful slave of the carpet-broom and the scrubbing-brush—“mistress's compliments, and master is not at home.”

Go into any public coffee-house used by regular, respectable men, and you shall find a fetish worshipper in the person of an old customer who has become used to a particular seat and a particular corner. Go in as a stranger and place yourself quietly in what appears to be the hardest worn chair or couch in the room, and when any old gentleman enters and walks round you several times, frowning and coughing, appearing to be restless and uncomfortable, or on the verge of striking you over the head with the umbrella that he always carries, you may know the fetish wor-

shipper, and you may know that you are seated on his regular, accustomed fetish chair. If you retain it for a certain time he will do either one of two things—leave the room with unconcealed disgust and temper, or ask you in no very bland tones to resign his fetish.

Some men of this class make fetishes of a particular omnibus, and a particular seat within that omnibus. If that omnibus be full, and that seat be occupied, they vent their wrath, sometimes upon the occupants, and sometimes upon the conductor. So well does the latter individual know the temper of the person he has to deal with, that he will even go the length of asking a timid man, or a youthful rider, to get outside and oblige an invalid.

Sometimes, a fetish is found in the shape of a pair of very old, and very easy carpet slippers, and woe upon any careless servant who has inadvertently mislaid the fetish when it takes this form. No other slippers will do, be they roomy as footbaths and soft as velvet. Sometimes the fetish is a tooth-brush, sometimes a hair-brush, sometimes a particular comb. Break, mislay, or destroy these things, and the fetish worshipper becomes the fierce avenger of his outraged idols. He can think of nothing but his lost or injured fetishes, and his wrath descends in the shape of an instant dismissal of the servants who have been guilty of such sacrilegious carelessness. Sometimes the fetish is a particular hat, a particular pair of boots, a particular coat, a particular walking-stick, or a particular watch.

When the fetish garments decay, in the common course of things, and become unfit for the prying scrutiny of society, then does the faithful worshipper make for them a shrine far from the curious eyes of the economical housewife, and the syren voice of the Jew clothesman in the streets, where they stand in sacred seclusion as hallowed remains of the cherished wardrobe of the past.

Sometimes the fetish is a china punch-bowl, a Wedgwood vase, a Sèvres dessert-plate, or a tea-service. If any man by accident should injure any of these fetishes, let him beware, for civilization has its modes of revenge, not less effective, because deliberate and refined, than the rude, impulsive vengeance of the despised African. Ask for the hand of the daughter of the worshipper whose fetish punch-bowl you have just destroyed, and meet with the refusal which your folly, ignorance, and carelessness so justly merit. Ask for a clerical living, or a Government berth, through the influence of the worshipper whose Wedgwood vase you have just dashed into a hundred pieces, and find that you have for ever shut yourself out from all chance of obtaining the object of your desires. Smash the Sèvres dessert-plate of your uncle, or the tea-service of your aunt, and give up at once all hopes of large legacies from either of those fruitful sources of property.

Sometimes the fetish is a small coin, a tester of a remote period ; sometimes a huge picture, the pride and glory of a ducal palace. Sometimes it is a rare

pamphlet, sometimes a black-letter volume, sometimes a murky engraving, with "Rembrandt fecit" scratched across a stone or a felled tree in one of the corners. Sometimes the fetish is a square-headed bull-dog in the neighbourhood of Lambeth, sometimes a bed of sturdy tulips in the neighbourhood of Chiswick. Sometimes the fetish takes the form of a pigeon, circling above the housetops in Bethnal Green, and then the worshipper may be seen, half-discovered on the roof of his dwelling, with a long, thin stick in his hand, watching the skimming of the sacred bird with eyes of devout admiration. If any fetish worshipper, of similar tastes, should succeed by decoys, as is not unfrequently the case, in entrapping the fetish pigeon of his brother worshipper, then is there war from that hour between the two men.

As we descend lower in the scale of society, of course we find the standard of civilization sinking in proportion; thus, the restraints which are respected in St. James's are totally despised in Bethnal Green. The two fetish pigeon-worshippers, imitating unconsciously the example of the untutored savage, are unable to come to any satisfactory arrangement without the aid of blows; and so we go on, from year to year, with our little likes, our great antipathies, our little weaknesses and our little strength, our shallow doubts and our deep convictions, our virtues and our crimes; and possibly it may turn out, when the great account is at length cast up, that the petty history of one degree of lati-

tude and longitude does not differ very materially from the petty history of another, and that there is not a wonderful difference, after all, between white and whitey-brown, and black, red, pink, olive, blue and yellow men.

REALLY DANGEROUS CLASSES.

THERE are two classes of men eternally at war with society—criminals and careless people; but, while the law has amply provided for the punishment of the first, it finds a difficulty in dealing out retributive justice for the second. A velvet-footed, light-fingered lad approaches me stealthily from behind, and without causing me the slightest bodily pain, or a moment's mental uneasiness, he abstracts from my pocket a common handkerchief of a value ranging between eighteenpence and two-and-sixpence, and the sentence of the court is, that he be imprisoned, with hard labour, for the period of six calendar months.

A brawny, gaping, agricultural giant from the country, who supposes that the highly difficult feat of walking the London streets can be performed at once without training or experience, may run against me with the force of a battering-ram; may grind to destruction one, if not both, of my favourite patent boots; may injure for months the agonizing corns that are covered by the smiling, deceitful faces of those boots; may damage my slender Geneva watch beyond the skill of the cleverest refugee to repair; may raise into mountainous heaps the smooth, flat surface of my irreproachable Corazza

shirt; may even seriously disfigure my faultless, aquiline nose; yet all this, according to the absurd usage of society, is to be balanced by the empty formulary — “I beg your pardon;” and there is to be no custody, no court, no judge, no jury, no sentence.

An old woman with imperfect eyesight, who will not pay for a servant to attend upon her, or a young lady whose passion for romantic literature is greater than her prudence, may, by the decree of a malicious fate, be found in the position of my next-door neighbour; and, because the physical weakness of the first, or the mental novel-reading-in-bed weakness of the second, causes the chamber-curtains to be set on fire, I am condemned at an uncertain time to walk the night along the giddy parapet, like Amina, in the opera; before the eyes of an assembled multitude; dressed in nothing worth mentioning, except a pair of flannel drawers, with a child in one arm and a French clock in the other. I am burnt out of my favourite dwelling and my easy-chair, my household gods are reduced to charcoal and ashes; I am transferred for many weeks to hastily chosen and inconvenient lodgings; I have to prepare a long detailed report to obtain compensation from a sulky fire-office; and the law, under all these injuries, affords me neither reward nor condolence. But if I am aroused by an attempted burglary in the dead of night, and I go down to my carefully prepared ambush to find a miserable member of the dangerous classes fixed by my artful

and penetrating spikes, and worried by my faithful and powerful mastiff, I have only to spend an hour entering the charge with an energetic policeman and an affable inspector, and I am then allowed to retire to my comfortable bed to dream of the criminal offender who has injured himself more than he has injured me, and the weapons which the law has placed in my hands wherewith to punish him.

A drover of imperfect humanity—whose desire to govern the unruly bullock is not tempered by a regard for the sufferings of the animal, or a calculation of the effect of over-driving upon the quality of the meat—may, by an intemperate indulgence in the illegal stimulus of a tenpenny nail at the end of his stick, goad a harmless beast until it becomes an infuriated monster that nothing but the pole-axe will quell. This excited animal, after it has frightened my wife and her nursemaid into a pastry-cook's and fits, may overturn the perambulator containing my two favourite children. Remedy I have none against the drover for his gross act of carelessness; but, when the excited animal comes to be dealt out in the accustomed form by the unsuspecting butcher, I may summons the latter individual for selling unwholesome meat, although it may not be so offensive as the venison which stands by its side to be sold at double its price.

If the results of premeditated crime are to be weighed against the results of accidental careless-

ness, it is not difficult to see on which side the balance will preponderate. Put the army of thieves, rogues, and vagabonds on one side, and see how soon they will be outnumbered on the other by the thoughtless, careless people, who form what I consider the really dangerous classes. There will be eccentric travellers who come down upon you in balloons in the darkness of the night; timid old men who, in the place of pictures, hang up firearms, which explode at inconvenient seasons; reckless cabmen who run over children in crowded streets as if they were mere chickens; forgetful servants who leave sharp-edged pails in dark passages; vermin exterminators who make arsenic rat-killing pies which fall in the way of schoolboys; scatterers of orange-peel upon public footways; men who write important letters without either date or address; men who never fail to miss an appointment; men who leave open razors in the way of little children; men who carry walking-sticks under their arms to destroy the eyes of the unwary; and those most trouble-giving of all the really dangerous classes, the losers of rings, trinkets, purses, and ten-pound notes. Few people who have not devoted much attention to the subject can be aware of the vast amount of annoyance and inconvenience caused by the losers to the finders of ten-pound notes.

I can imagine a man being driven mad by finding a constant succession of ten-pound notes. In the first place he is put in a painful position

when he picks up the flimsy treasure-trove exposed to the wonder, curiosity, and ignorant envy of the passer-by. That got over, he has then to perform his duty as a citizen, having, probably, to bestow much reflection upon what that duty may be. He makes a personal communication to the authorities of the Bank of England; he causes several hand-bills to be printed and posted at the different station-houses; and he frames an advertisement as neatly as possible, which he takes to the offices of the leading newspapers to be inserted. This is only the commencement of his trouble; for the general public are now aware of the fact that he has found a ten-pound note, and are in possession of his name and address.

No man would believe what a number of persons there are in existence belonging to nearly every grade of society, who suddenly find themselves in the position of losers of ten-pound notes. Dropping ten-pound notes within the area of a certain circle, and within the period of a certain time, seems to be a destiny as common to many of the human race as the small-pox or the measles. Setting aside the letters received from people in out-of-the-way parts of the country, who appear to have come up to London for the purpose of leaving a ten-pound note lying in the streets, the unfortunate finder of the treasure is summoned from his bed-room in the morning to an interview with several of the most impatient and the most early-rising of the personal applicants. Some are indignant that their honour

is not relied upon, and that they are not trusted with a sight of the precious document. Some are minute in their narrative particulars up to the point when the note was supposed to be lost, and then their minds become confused, and their memories a perfect blank. Some indulge in an eloquent appeal to your feelings as a husband, a brother, an uncle, or a father of a numerous family. Some are legally precise, and serve you with a wordy and formal notice not to deliver up that note to any one within a particular period, upon pain of proceedings being instituted. Some are evidently swindlers trying to collect information with a view of preparing an application. All this while, perhaps, the rightful owner does not come forward ; or, if he does, he is so cunningly concealed by his own exertions, that it is impossible for you to recognize him amongst the mass of pretenders and mistaken individuals.

Early in the morning, in the middle of the day, as you are going out to keep a business appointment, or to take your wife for a walk, or while you are entertaining friends at dinner, you are subject to the intrusion of candidates for the lost property ; and your domestic privacy, for the time being, is destroyed. Worried on all sides, from within and without ; your temper ruffled by the circumstances in which you are placed ; your wife, in a moment of weakness, accusing you of injudicious conduct in directing all the applications to your private house ; your replying angrily that you know

how to conduct yourself in such an emergency (as if you had been in the habit of finding ten-pound notes from your early youth); you are tempted at last to give up the property to some ungrateful—and, probably, fictitious—owner, who almost complains of the amount spent in printing, and requires to see vouchers for all the newspaper advertisements.

I can only regard careless people of this kind with anything like patience, when I reflect that the treasure which they sow broadcast sometimes falls upon fruitful ground. I am satisfied when I imagine the ten-pound note picked up by the members of a large, struggling household, who are too ignorant to make much effort in the way of advertising their good fortune. After a short and decent period of delay, the representative of value is considered to be a member of the family. The back-rent is fully paid up; the baby is treated to a new hat with a voluminous feather; the youngest boy is provided with a new pair of boots, and his old ones are half-soled and heeled; a new hat is procured for Bill, and a very good second-hand coat for the master of the family; the little account is balanced at the chandler's shop, and a new house-broom and pail are purchased to inaugurate a new era of cleanliness; an old shawl of the mistress is properly scoured and renovated, and a certain light straw-bonnet which she had when she was married, is by the aid of cleaning and new ribbons made to look better than it ever did within the memory of man; finally, the

whole troop have one grand night of enjoyment at the local theatre, and the balance of the treasure (one pound, fifteen shillings) is safely deposited in the parochial savings'-bank as a reserve for doctoring and family exigencies.

BLACK, WHITE, AND WHITEY-BROWN.

For years have I sought him. From the days when I started in all the hope and freshness of youth, to the present hour, when I am sick and feeble with age. I have cried aloud for him until my voice is hoarse and broken. I have looked for him until my eyes are blind with eager watching. I have listened for his footstep, to find but the echo of that which I instinctively avoid. I have consulted those who should have been my guides, my philosophers, and my friends ; but their way of life had not led them across his path : their learning and experience had not taught them where to seek him. Black men they had found in numbers countless as the insects of the air : white men they had found in masses like clouds of dust, men whose whiteness was almost too dazzling for mere earthly eyes ; but the whitey-brown man was more rare to them than the black swan, the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, the blue dahlia, the lost books of Livy, or the site of the Garden of Eden.

It is hard to be told, even by the oracular voice of recognized authority, that we live in a world composed entirely of black fools and white geniuses, of black demons and white angels ; in which the moderate, mediocre, happy medium, whitey-brown man

is totally unknown. If we go into those numerous lesser worlds that exist within the greater, there is still the same parochial faculty for imitating the manners and echoing the dogmas of the parent state. There is the literary world or parish, carefully guarded by its appointed beadles, who have strict instructions not to admit any stranger into the temple if he does not wear a dress of unexceptionable whiteness, scrape his feet upon the critical scraper, and wipe them well upon the critical mat. Can it be that, during all these countless years and centuries, no whitey-brown man ever knocked at the sacred gate, to be admitted with a welcome, or sent away howling with a kick? The appointed beadles have never seen a man of that peculiar tint; those who have been refused admittance are all jet-black idiots; those who are assembled round the anointed altar are pure snow-white men of genius. Look, and judge for yourself. Books, I am told (as every man must know who reads them), are of two kinds, and of two kinds only; those that overflow with wit, imagination, humour, pathos, and constructive ability; those that have neither constructive ability, pathos, humour, imagination, nor wit, and are, moreover, indebted to a printer's reader for what little grammatical correctness they may fortunately possess. The first are the sole, inspired productions of snow-white geniuses; the second, the feeble ravings of mistaken jet-black fools. The moderate, sensible, mediocre, whitey-brown man, if he exists at all in the literary parish, must live in carefully preserved seclu-

sion from the public eye ; for he never comes forward either to challenge opinion or to satisfy curiosity.

There is the great and equally well-guarded parish of art, in which the whitey-brown man was never known to penetrate. The parish of art knows of only two productions ; the white man's delicious masterpiece, and the black man's unsightly daub. Everything is either priceless or worthless. There is no happy medium. From a Raffaele we descend to a sign-board ; from a sign-board we ascend to a Michael Angelo. The oracles have spoken, and we are bound to believe. There is the pure white-man artist, let him be crowned with diamonds. There is the jet-black-man painter, let him be broken upon the wheel. The whitey-brown man has made no sign.

Architecture has only two kinds of building, to show an eager and expectant public. The scaffolding is removed, and the great work either stands as a noble palace or a mean county jail. The white man has had a limited fund to deal with, but has raised with it a structure which combines the practical solidity of the Grecian, with the spiral lightness of the Gothic. The black man has squandered unlimited funds upon a miserable abortion ; a patchwork nightmare with towering steeples suggestive of a Christian temple, and porticoes like a combination of gigantic four-post bedsteads : utterly heathen, from the soles of their plinths to the crowns of their capitals. The whitey-brown man has sent in neither design nor tender.

Sculpture also knows nothing of the existence of the whitey-brown man ; for he neither comes forward to adorn the metropolis, nor to disgrace his country ; to caricature our greatest heroes in stone, nor to hand them down to admiring posterity in graceful attitudes of marble. The black man and the white man are still the only visible artists ; the first to be execrated for his ignorance of the commonest anatomy ; the second to be worshipped as a worthy wearer of the mantle of the great Praxiteles.

If I go into the large and important parish of music, I meet with no better success. Black composers are reigning like false usurpers, without the power of putting together two harmonious notes. Discordant productions are being scraped upon discordant instruments by discordant black executants, listened to and applauded by indiscriminating black audiences, while white composers are lying neglected in unmerited obscurity. Suddenly the picture is reversed ; the white composer is raised on high ; ovations, money, testimonials, decorations, all are too small to reward his merits ; all executants are too black to give adequate expression to his immaculate inspirations. But the whitey-brown man, whether singer or composer, has never yet been heard of in this parish.

The great parish of the drama is filled entirely by black and white. There are obscure traditions existing that one or two whitey-brown men have appeared upon the stage in the course of a century ; but the evidence is not to be relied upon. Whatever

may have been the original colour of the leading artists, they used every means in their power to alter the shade ; and, rather than not be considered white, they even consented to be daubed black.

In the more important parishes of politics, war, and diplomacy, I entirely lose even the bare tradition of the whitey-brown man. All politicians, warriors, and diplomatists, I am told, are absolutely black, or absolutely white ; benefactors, or curses to their country, patriots in exile, or dangerous despots in power ; bloated place-holders, or disinterested guardians of the public weal ; warriors who have neither courage, prudence, nor the faculty of combination ; warriors who have the faculty of combination in the highest degree, who overflow with courage, and whose prudence is unequalled ; diplomatists who are decorated moths who cut into the national finances, or subtle strategists who preserve the interests of their beloved country from the insidious attacks of rivals and wily monarchs. There is nothing between these two extremes—nothing in the shape of a whitey-brown man.

I go into a law-court, and look upon nothing but black and white : the plaintiff, pure and spotless ; the defendant, a villain of the deepest dye. If the jury, in their ignorance, and with their defective vision, fancy they see before them a whitey-brown defendant, and a whitey-brown plaintiff, I hear them reproved at once by the clear-sighted judge, who requests them to declare that they look upon nothing but perfect black and perfect white.

Over the convivial dinner-table I hear that all men are of the purest white, and have been so from their cradles upwards. Here is the furnace which purifies the blackest man amongst us, at least as long as the bottle circulates and the chairman is proposing the regulation health. The whitey-brown man is never seen at these gatherings of the good and pure; the stewards have not invited him; the oldest waiter does not know him. What am I to conclude, but that there is no such a moderate, mediocre, happy medium, rare, priceless creature as the whitey-brown man in *any* parish?

MEN IN MASKS.

I AM not about to observe that all the world is a stage, because that remark has appeared before. I am not about to compare my fellow-creatures to players, because that comparison was common-place in the time of Queen Elizabeth. Masks, as distinguished from faces, is my little grain of common-place, which I am going to beat out in a somewhat spreading and ill-natured manner.

How many houses do I know that are open glass-houses, in which the inhabitants, like monkeys in a cage, are always playing antics for the amusement of their friends and the public? Hundreds; thousands; tens of thousands. How many of these people are not living under a mask which is never thrown off—night or day—as long as any one is found to gaze upon them? Not one;—I am grieved to say it.

Honesty is not rare; virtue is plentiful; courage can be had for the asking; but people will not be natural; they scorn repose, they are always striking an attitude; they are always “going in” for something.

There is my fearfully active friend, with his very transparent mask, who is always going in for energy. His presence is like a whirlwind. He cannot sit

still. He was in Paris yesterday. He will be on the top of Snowdon to-morrow. He came up from Cambridge this morning to keep an appointment, and he has just ten minutes to spare, which he has considerately devoted to me. And what am I doing? Smoking my pipe in my slippers and dressing-gown, as usual? Ah, well; all men are not made alike. Of course I have heard of his starting two daily newspapers, organizing a new line of American packet-ships, and getting into Parliament for an Irish borough, since the week before last? I was not aware that he was the sole contractor for the Grand Trunk Railroad of California? Oh, yes. Passed five weeks in a railway express carriage, issuing orders to clerks and work-people, who leaped in and out at certain stations. Some people can do these things; others sink under them. Capital story about a "boots," at Manchester. Asked to be called, with hot water, at four a.m., but the waiter forgot to put it on the slate. Walked into the coffee-room of the hotel at twelve fifteen, p.m.; and, when the Boots came in with his cap in his hand, apologizing for the waiter's neglect, told him he—No. 14—had been to London and back since then, and had forgotten all about it. Astonishment of Boots quite amazing. Of course I shall go and see him when his new mansion is built. Plans just decided upon: foundation scooped out; all to be finished, under heavy penalties, in twenty-one days. Good-bye. Oh, my poor head!

Not very unlike this violent mummer, is my

friend who wears the robust mask—who goes in for rude health and ruddy vigour. He is always draining a pot of porter, with a loud smack of the lips, stamping his feet, striking his chest, and giving imaginary blows from the shoulder. He rises at six every morning (summer or winter); he leaps into a cold-water bath (summer or winter), sometimes half-full of ice; he takes a three-mile spin up hill, and a three-mile trot down; he scorns tea, coffee, eggs, and toast, and breakfasts on half-raw beefsteaks, stale bread, and porter. He plays a good deal at cricket, and he almost lives in the open air; he has never had a day's illness in his life, and he does not know what a doctor's bill means; he weighs fourteen stone, but every ounce of flesh upon him is as firm as India-rubber (feel and try), and he only wonders any sensible person can hesitate for a moment to follow his example. Nothing disagrees with him. He can stop up all night; he can drink bad wine; he can digest pork-pies, welsh-rarebit, and lobster-salad, washed down with punch that is made to suit a salamander. Wonderful! Though his mask is as broad and palpable as a giant's in a pantomime, he never loses an opportunity of thrusting it under my nose.

Another wearer of a broad, coarse mask, is my ready-money friend, who goes in for universal power, based upon cash capital. His funds may not be extensive—I know he is not very rich—but he makes the most of the goods with which the gods have provided him. He likes large, heavy coins,

that make a substantial show; and crowns, half-crowns, and thick copper pennies must have been created for his special gratification.

His purse is like a huge sand-bag, not easily forgotten, and it is no wonder he was never known to leave it behind him. He considers no man wealthy, no matter what his landed or other property may be, unless he can command a stout bagful of the circulating medium. He does not like bank-notes, he despises bank-cheques, and he takes his stand firmly as an individual on a pure metallic currency.

It is his boast that he never yet owed a penny for a single hour; and it is also his further boast that he never will. He smiles at debtors' prisons, insolvent courts, and lawyers' offices; as, he says, that such places were never meant for him. He throws his heavy purse on the counter when he is driving a hard bargain, and he trusts to its silent power to bring him off in triumph. He knows, or affects to know, of nothing that cannot be settled with ready money; and he considers the legal system of fines a convincing proof of the correctness of his opinions. If he ran over a child in the street or shot a peasant-boy instead of a partridge, he would pull out his sand-bag purse before the magistrate, and ask, "How much?" with the most provoking confidence. His wealth is of the electro-plated kind, and it sparkles in proportion to its shallowness.

Another wearer of a mask, who contrasts forcibly

with the last, is my extremely delicate friend, who goes in for refinement and an elegant state of repose. His nerves are very fine ; his taste is exquisite ; he cannot bear popular pictures, popular music, or popular literature ; he hears the bellowings of stage-tragedians, and the trumpet-song in the opera of Puritani, without moving from his comfortable chamber-couch ; he once ate a pea ; he once saw a masterpiece of Turner's painting, and he had a brain-fever which lasted several days ; he never had a coat that fitted him properly, or a well-made pair of boots ; he would not be a member of Parliament for twenty thousand a-year ; he thinks the ballet is not what it used to be ; he says that people do not dress now-a-days, but jump about in sacks ; he has been to Brighton, but never to Ramsgate—thank Heaven, he has not yet fallen so low as that. He would not be introduced to my energetic or my robust masker for all the wealth of Australia.

He can see nothing to amuse him in town, and he abhors the rude, half-savage sports of the field. He calls his valet, and finding that no turbot is to be had in the market, he requests to be left undisturbed in bed, until the same hour on the following day.

This wearer of a thin, transparent mask may be called a rather prejudiced man, if anything so vigorous as prejudice can exist in so affectedly feeble a body. He has a contrast in the person of another masker, whose pride it is to go in for universal liberty of opinion.

My friend who wears the unprejudiced mask, is never tired of calling himself a citizen of the world. He belongs to no country; he has no national feeling. He would sleep in a double-bedded room with a Negro, a red Indian, or a Malay pirate. He knows no distinction of caste, colour, or position; and he cannot understand why the eternal principles of right and freedom should be thought good in one latitude and longitude, and bad in another. So far I could agree with him, if he was not so dreadfully conscious of his attitude. George the Fourth may have been no better than the late King of Oude, but it is rather antithetical (if not treasonable) to say so. My friend in the unprejudiced mask is as lenient to individuals as he is to nationalities. His opinion upon the alleged tyranny of Richard the Third is suspended while he waits for further evidence.

He considers the case not proved against many notorious criminals of history, and he is compelled in every company to check all abuse of their memories. He married a lineal descendant of the late Mrs. Brownrigg, to show his superiority to names and connections; for the same reason he chooses his servants from the jails and the street, and passes by the possessors of long character pedigrees.

He carries into private life the calmness of the judicial bench, and he is excessively annoyed at any public comments upon a case that is under judgment. Here, also, I could agree with him, if his mask was not quite so transparent. He will salute

a cats'-meat man in the middle of Regent Street; if the cats'-meat man had the advantage of knowing him in his youth. He believes in no monstrosities of foreign dress or cookery, until he has patiently tried the garments, and tasted all the dishes. He has appeared in the Chinese slipper, to the manifest torture of his feet; and he has tasted of birds'-nests and stewed kittens to the evident torture of his stomach.

To such a pitch does he carry his masquerade, full in the public gaze, that he affects to feel more pride in being seen talking to the common hangman, than receiving a mark of familiar recognition from the greatest hero of the day.

These are only some few representative men in masks—picked at random from the social masquerade—who have the talent to be artificial, but not the courage to be natural. As I look upon them I become, however unwillingly, one of the posturing crowd myself; and though shrouded in that small cynical mask (which is so easy to put on), I am willing to throw off my disguise if they will abandon theirs, and to welcome them gladly as men and as brothers.

CARRIAGES.

THOUGH I have not mixed very much with the world, I flatter myself I know a good deal about it. I have got eyes; I have got ears; and I have had the advantage of living half my life in a moderate-sized, second-rate square, near the exact centre of the metropolis. My neighbours are professional people of all classes, who use their neighbourhood until they gather strength for a leap into one more fashionable, and who sometimes miss their footing, and sink back into suburban obscurity. I am a maiden lady, living on my property—a Government annuity—and I stand like a monument, or something of that kind, unmoved by the changes around me. I could write a very instructive essay upon the philosophy of squares, but that is not my present object. My mind is full of the subject of carriages—broughams, chariots, and such things—and I have been advised to put my thoughts upon paper. Miss Biggleswade, a particular friend of mine, and a very sensible person, who takes tea with me twice a-week—Wednesday and Saturday—has often urged me to record the results of my observation.

“Miss Camomile,” she has said, “I am sure you are neglecting to use the talent with which it has pleased Providence to provide you. I have

read all the books that now come out, which are never tired of abusing the hollow mockeries of the universe, and I assure you that I have met with nothing in their pages so edifying as your conversation over your own tea-table."

These are Miss Biggleswade's exact words, and they have determined me to write a few lines on the philosophy of carriages.

I will not involve myself in any quarrels by mentioning names; I will not commit myself by making any direct assertions; but it has always seemed to me a very extraordinary and inexplicable thing that Dr. A's professional skill should have increased so wonderfully from the moment that he started a carriage. Before that event took place, his reputation was not worth a jar of tamarinds, and no one in their senses would have called him in to doctor a kitten or a sick lapdog. His diploma was obtained from a place they call Idlebeggar, or some such name, in Germany, where degrees, I am told, are sold in the open streets, at a price varying from five shillings to fifteen-and-sixpence. He cut off the right leg of poor Mrs. B.'s baby, when there was no more the matter with it than with the lamp-post round the corner. The unfortunate child has been a cripple ever since, with a wooden stump, which is always making holes in the flower-beds of the enclosure. He knew no more of the commonest drugs than my milkman—perhaps not half so much, in these days of general adulteration—and if it had not been for his assistant, a young man whom he kept in a back-kitchen upon

forty pounds a-year and his victuals, I am convinced the whole neighbourhood would have been decimated by poison. People talk of the prudence and economy of putting down a carriage because they are totally ignorant of the subject upon which they are discoursing. If Dr. A. had not procured the green brougham with the two gray horses—upon credit, I believe—at the exact moment that he did, he might have found himself, in another twelvemonth, behind an apothecary's counter. He had enough sense and knowledge of the world to save himself from that; and poor Mrs. B.'s crippled baby, with all his many other failures, were at once forgotten by his patients. People of that very large class who have more money than wisdom immediately discovered him to be a highly meritorious practitioner. People who did not keep carriages themselves were particular in engaging him, because they liked to see his handsome vehicle parading before their houses. He attended consultations he was never invited to before, and secured many acquaintances as patients by taking them home from evening-parties in his carriage. Though his brougham was not decorated with placards announcing his trade and his residence, it was quite as much an advertising medium as any van from a furnishing ironmonger's.

There is Mr. C., the great portrait-painter, who got me to give him six sittings, and then could make nothing of me; it is quite marvellous what a command of form and colour he has acquired since he has had the command of a carriage. Though I

cannot see any connection between the two things myself, there are plenty of people who can, and I suppose I must therefore consider myself a remarkably stupid person. I have heard his pictures called caricatures, tea-boards, sign-boards, Babylonian frescoes, and many other contemptuous names ; but that was some little time before he had improved himself with a carriage. Now, his critics are content to hang up in their halls and dining-rooms the vilest daub he thinks proper to produce, for his terms have advanced with his fashionable style of living, and there is no vulgar suspicion so strong and lasting as a belief in a high-priced article, especially in pictures. His barmaids have become blooming matrons ; his old hags are turned into aristocratic dowagers ; his angular imps of children are changed to Sir Joshua's cherubs ; and his butchers' boys are the flower of English chivalry. This comes of stopping the way with a carriage.

There is Mr. D., the celebrated musician ; he could neither sing, compose, nor play until he indulged in the luxury of a carriage. From that moment, his voice became a tenor of remarkable purity and range ; his touch upon the piano was considered equal to the best masters ; and the music-publishers suddenly found out they had long neglected a man of decided genius. He composed an opera which a theatrical manager was found to produce solely because it had got the carriage-stamp of excellence. Of course, the public were not to be deceived, for Mr. D., although he made the most of waving a

white stick in the orchestra—conducting, I believe, they call it—could not bring his chariot into the theatre, and the piece was strongly condemned on the first night of representation. The audience, who had loudly expressed their contempt of the production, were astonished to read the next morning in their papers, that the work was the most brilliant success of the most brilliant composer of his time. The carriage had been driving about pretty briskly during the night.

Miss E., who has suddenly obtained a reputation as one of the most rising young authoresses of the day, has ridden gently into notoriety on the borrowed cushions of Lady F.'s brougham. If you cannot purchase or hire a carriage, the next best thing is to borrow one. Miss E. had more wit and judgment than I gave her credit for, when she fastened herself so securely to the skirts of her ladyship. The basketful of well-thumbed manuscripts—fashionable novels made up of paste, scissors, and the experience of a back drawing-room—were at once taken out and dusted, and put with the writer in a corner of my lady's carriage. Fashionable publishers who, before this, were always choked up with matter, were now delighted to be favoured with the offer of so highly meritorious a work, especially as it was to be dedicated, by permission, to her ladyship. Miss E. must be a clever person, after all, to manage so well as she does with such very slender advantages. We must not be too hard upon the errors in her works, for people cannot be ex-

pected to scratch out and alter with a pair of scissors.

There is Mr. G., who now calls himself an architect, because he could never succeed as a builder; he knows as well as any man the advantages of owning a handsome chariot. The only local building he ever had a contract for was our parochial school-house; and one day, just as the boys had providentially gone to dinner, this precious structure fell down, and buried an usher and a man who was repairing the flooring. There was an inquest, of course, a very formal affair, and Mr. G. prepared for it by engaging an eminent counsel, and starting a distinguished carriage. The counsel did his work well, and so did the vehicle. Mr. G. got off without so much as a censure, for his equipage was always driving up and down before the court; and it was clearly shown that the carpenter who had perished in the ruins had brought it entirely on himself by using spikes instead of nails, and driving them down with a clumsy sledge-hammer. Mr. G. had the decency, however, to retire from the building business after this, and to turn himself into an architect. He now draws very pretty pictures upon paper, which other people alter, and build from or not, as they think proper; while he secures a very high payment for his designs, because he rides in his carriage.

I am not surprised at the gregarious habits of carriage-made people. I am not surprised that Mr. H., the well-known solicitor, whose reputation

is based upon his brougham, should give his briefs to Mr. K., the popular barrister, whose reputation is also based upon his brougham. I am not surprised that both these gentlemen should be standing counsel and attorney to Mr. L., the banker, whose wealth, or reputed wealth, has to a great extent, no better foundation than his carriage. Nor am I surprised that the two legal gentlemen should bank at the establishment of Mr. L. There is a principle of mutual advantage at work in these cases, which explains the interchange of patronage; but I am astonished that the general public, who have no interest to consult, except to get the very best article, advice, or assistance for their money, should bow down before an empty go-cart, that costs, perhaps, a hundred and fifty pounds a year; while they talk very loudly of the car of Juggernaut, and pity the wretched superstition of the Hindoos.*

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THE LEVIATHAN CHEESE.

I THINK if the liberty and the power were given me to punish my bitterest enemy, I should cause him to become a giant. I can conceive no position likely to be more fruitful of misery and annoyance to him, or more fruitful of revengeful gratification to me. He would be one of a limited, but unfortunate, tribe, whose existence must constantly remind them that they are not made to measure. At every turn in the valley of life he would find himself a huge misfit. His head would bump against the upper cornice as he came in at any ordinary door; his legs would be difficult to dispose of, under the widest dining-table; his boots would cost him double the price of any other man's boots; his sixteen-shilling trouser-maker would strike, every time his broad countenance looked in at the shop-window; his appetite would be expensive; his omnibus conductor would never see him; and his cabmen would fly from him as they do from a well-known sixpenny passenger. If he indulged in reading, and felt curious about the history of his fellows, he would open one of the most melancholy pages in the whole range of personal records. The general fate of kings seems sad enough, but the fate of giants is surely sadder. Some have been struck down by inspired mannikins:

some have sunk under the degrading monotony of being nothing but a constant spectacle ; while others have lived only as carriers of advertising placards.

The unfortunate destiny of giants animate, is shared by giants inanimate. The wicker representatives of Gog and Magog have, ere now, been half devoured by rats ; the Colossus of Rhodes was hurled down by an early earthquake ; the Pyramids still exist, but only as unproductive cemeteries ; the largest picture in London—the “Raising of Lazarus”—has been pining unpurchased, for years, amongst toys and parrots ; and the most recent ambitious effort of joint-stock enterprise—the big ship—is little more, at present, than a disastrous experiment. Every town and village, and country, can tell its story of some unwieldy local monster, who started into life with every prospect of a brilliant career, and ended as another example of the emptiness of human greatness. It matters little of what material this monster may have been made, for iron and wood have gone the way of flesh and blood, and stone has fallen under the inevitable doom. How, then, in the face of all this, could the villagers of West Pennard expect a happier destiny for that gigantic cheese, whose history has yet to be inserted in the archives of Somerset ?

If the Queen of England had never been presented with a gigantic brown loaf (about the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight), it is more than probable that this once famous cheese would never have been heard of. The mind of West Pen-

nard, as represented by its principal farmers, in tavern assembled, had come to the conclusion that a large loaf, without an equally large cheese, was worse than useless. As no presentation, however extraordinary, is considered too extravagant or absurd to make to the British Sovereign, the West Pennard farmers decided that an enormous cheese should be at once manufactured for royalty, and a committee was immediately formed to conduct the necessary business. An active canvass was commenced the next morning throughout the parish for contributions, and not a single farmer refused a liberal supply of milk. Some became so interested in the Leviathan Cheese that they gave their whole day's produce; and the contributions, taken together, amounted to the milk of seven hundred and thirty-seven cows.

The next step taken was to get a proper "vat" and "follower" made of solid mahogany: and the latter vessel was handsomely adorned with the royal arms. The eventful day being fixed, seven of the largest cheese-tubs in West Pennard were borrowed, the best dairy-woman in the parish was selected, and the lines of the Leviathan Cheese were laid down.

A few days afterwards, when the cheese was considered sufficiently pressed, and the donors had assembled in great force to witness the launch of their property, the first hitch occurred in the life of the giant. It stuck to the sides of its mahogany dwelling, and obstinately refused to come out

without being taken to pieces. A council was immediately held to consult about this unexpected difficulty, and it was resolved that the experiment should be tried of grinding the curd again, and rubbing it with dry cloths, as too much whey was considered to be the cause of the failure. The second effort was crowned with the desired success, and a real Somersetshire cheese was produced, weighing about half a ton.

The fame of this giant cheese soon spread far and wide, and many hundreds of people came from all parts of the county to see it. It remained under the care of the chosen dairy-woman until it was pronounced sufficiently firm to be moved; the price of admission for each visitor, in the meantime, being fixed at a shilling. At this point, one of the donors kindly offered to give up his parlour, a large and convenient room, to ripen it in, and this offer being accepted, it was removed to its new quarters, carefully bound up in its former mahogany casing to secure it from injury. The weight and size of the giant rendered it impossible to "turn" it without the aid of machinery, and an apparatus was constructed which brought this very necessary operation in cheese-making within the power of one person. Notwithstanding this invention, the rest of the farmers could not trust the handling of so valuable a prize to one man, and they assembled nearly every afternoon at the house of the keeper to watch the development of their property. As a want of hospitality is not a West Pennard failing,

the host was very liberal with his best cider, and by the time the process of "ripening" was considered complete (a period of several months), the whole of his previous year's making of cider—from twenty to thirty hogsheads—had thoroughly disappeared. The number of nights on which late sounds of conviviality were heard roaring round this giant cheese are tenaciously remembered by many goodwives in West Pennard.

The cheese being now fit for presentation to her Majesty, a great meeting of shareholders was held, and a deputation chosen, consisting of three of the principal proprietors. To give this deputation greater importance, the parish factotum was elected to accompany it. That nothing might be wanting to render it worthy of the occasion, the four delegates were arrayed in new suits of clothes, made under general advice by a fashionable tailor.

The Leviathan Cheese, duly launched, was taken to London by this imposing guard of honour, and laid at the feet of her gracious Majesty. Its reception by royalty was everything that West Pennard could have wished, the only objection to the giant being its extreme youth. As it was not considered old enough to cut, her Majesty requested the delegates to take it back, and present it again at a more mature age, when she promised a donation of one hundred pounds to the poor of the giant's parish.

When the delegates returned to West Pennard, they gave a highly glowing account—in fact, many highly glowing accounts—of their reception at the

palace. They spoke particularly of his Royal Highness Prince Albert in terms of the warmest admiration, and remarked, almost familiarly, that "they had never met a nicer fellow." So much did they dwell upon this portion of their narrative, that the original curiosity of their listeners and fellow-shareholders soon changed to jealousy. Knighthood was the least honour expected to follow such a reception; a prospect not at all pleasing to the general body of contributors. This feeling grew at last into open rebellion, and attempts were made to get possession of the Leviathan Cheese. A considerable reward was even offered to any one who would cut or damage it, and its trustees became so alarmed, that, at the cost of twelve pounds, they had a strong iron cage constructed for its safe-keeping, with a brilliant crown upon the top, to warn off all treasonable enemies. Not feeling secure even with this stronghold, and this emblem of authority, they caused heavy iron bars to be affixed to the windows of the room in which the caged giant was deposited; also to the mantelpiece, as some daring, disloyal chimney-sweep from Bath had undertaken to get down the chimney at night and basely earn the reward.

The three members of the deputation, omitting the factotum, resided at Sticklings, Woodlands, and East Street, and the united parish, fearing that, from the excitement and ill-feeling, the honour which seemed likely to fall upon it might be lost for ever, very wisely took the power of conferring the expected patents of nobility into its own hands;

and the three farmers, under the action of the parochial will, became respectively the Marquis of Sticklings, the Duke of Woodlands, and Lord East Street. This proceeding rather increased the jealousy and activity of the opposition; and, by some means, they obtained possession of the mahogany vat and follower. Making a plaster of Paris imitation of the Leviathan Cheese, they started an exhibition in London, and kept it open for some months with considerable success. Upon this the Marquis of Sticklings, the Duke of Woodlands, and Lord East Street, having asked and gained the permission of her gracious Majesty to exhibit the real, original giant, they took a room, as all passing exhibitors used to do some ten years ago, at the Egyptian Hall. It was now the turn of the plaster of Paris party to make another move, and flying to Chancery, they obtained an injunction prohibiting the exhibition, in London, of the original Leviathan. Driven from the metropolis, the giant and its trustees went to the country, and pitched their tents, to some purpose, in several of the largest towns in Somersetshire. If the Marquis of Sticklings, the Duke of Woodlands, and Lord East Street had been ordinary showmen, with no recently acquired and extraordinary dignity to maintain, a fair amount might have been realized by the exhibition of the giant; but, as they were very careful not to disgrace their titles by any display of meanness or economy, they spent all the money they received, neglected their farms, and were several hundred pounds out of

pocket besides. The plaster of Paris party were also losers by the contest, their law and other expenses amounting to a nearly equal sum.

The Leviathan Cheese was ultimately taken to its old abode, the residence of the Marquis of Sticklings, where it remained until the death of that esteemed nobleman. It was then removed to the house of the Duke of Woodlands, where it rested, an unfortunate, worn-out, neglected giant, until his grace gave up farming, and took upon himself the management of the Old Down Inn, on the Mendip Hills. The history of the giant cheese, from this moment, becomes exceedingly obscure. Individual testimony fades away, and report—the vaguest kind of report—only stands in its place. This report asserts that the giant cheese was tried, and found lamentably wanting. Its greatest friends, after tasting it, could not conscientiously pronounce it to be first-rate. It went the way of all giants, leviathans, mammoths, and nine-days' wonders. Let us draw a veil over its wretched ending: it was given to the pigs.

Though dead, and consumed in every material sense, like many more once famous animate and inanimate giants, it still lives again in immortal verse. His grace the Duke of Woodlands composed a song about it, which he had wedded to immortal music, and which, after the fashion of Homer, he was proud of singing to himself.*

* I am indebted to an unknown correspondent for the facts in this story: they were sent to Mr. Dickens, and handed over to me.

MY NAME.

It may be of very little consequence where a man is born ; it may be of very little consequence what his parents have been before him ; it may be of very little consequence whether he is physically weak, or physically strong ; but it is certainly of vital interest to him what name has fallen on his shoulders. I am not now considering Christian appellations, though they are not to be despised. I can imagine a very matter-of-fact individual pining gradually away with secret grief because his godfathers have called him Udolpho. I can imagine a gentleman of strong conservative principles living a life of torture because his first name is Cromwell ; and I can imagine another gentleman of an opposite way of thinking being equally tormented with the Christian title of Stuart. I can imagine a poetic being writhing under the name of Herring ; a feeble mannikin smiling sadly as he reflects upon his name of Hercules. I can suppose many cases of life-long torment even more painful and self-evident than these ; but my present object is to direct attention to the influence exercised by surnames. I will give a few imaginary examples.

My name is Shakespeare : there is no getting out of that. I might call myself Warwick Avon,

Esquire, and succeed in deceiving the general public; but my family, my friends, and my acquaintances, would know the painful truth. Every man feels within him an inspiration to do something; and I am sure I could write a round of plays. I might not attain the rude vigour of the Elizabethan dramatists; I might not perhaps equal the brilliancy of dialogue which distinguishes the writers of a later period; I might not be able to reach that ingenuity of construction, and that high morality, which make the modern French drama what it is; but I am sure that my natural genius lies in the direction of the literature of the stage. What prevents my making an effort? My name. I cannot get over that mountain, which has accumulated some centuries before my time. I dread the jokes that would be inevitably made upon my first, my sixth, or my tenth attempt. I know what all the small critical wits would say; I could not exist to be slapped upon the back in public places, and be asked "How goes it, my young Swan, in the realms of Thespis?" Some men might be equal to the endurance of this, but I am not one of them. I could not enjoy a life that was one competitive examination,—especially where the odds were fifty thousand to one against me. I am mute; I am inglorious; I am dumb and inarticulate; I am conscious of my latent talent, but I stop its natural development; I decline the struggle; I do not start in the race. And why? Because my name is Shakespeare.

My name is Wren. I feel a call to do something

in the shape of public buildings, but when I take the designing pencil in my hand, the great black mass of our national cathedral overshadows my genius. I have no feeling for poetry; I could not carve a statue, I have no mechanical aptitude, I could not paint a picture, and I have no desire to write books. My intellectual impulses all point in an architectural direction, and yet I dare not give my inclination play. I have not the courage to brave the world's ill-natured comparisons; I shun a perpetual competitive examination with one whose fame and importance were settled before I was born. I am nothing but a discontented bricklayer. And why? Because my name is Wren.

My name is Cook. If any one ever made me a captain, I think I should go mad. Travelling is with me a passion—almost a disease; but I have a particular aversion to going round the world. I need not enter into my reasons for this, as they must be sufficiently obvious. I have seen a good many countries; I have lived with a good many people; I have spoken strange languages, and I have eaten of strange dishes. I am not deaf, I am not blind, and my experiences would not be altogether unacceptable to my fellow-creatures; but I decline to record them. They will die with me. And why? Because my name is Cook.

My name is Hogarth. If there is one thing that I have a special talent for, it is painting. It hardly becomes me to expatiate upon my own merits; but, as I am the sole depository of the secret, I must

necessarily speak, or the world will never be informed. I have not the colour of Rubens ; I have not the drawing of Michael Angelo ; I have not the grace of Raffaello, nor the religious sentiment of Correggio ; my force all lies in pictorial narrative, and my powers of caricature. Why have I never painted anything, but what I have immediately destroyed ; and why, at the present moment, am I in business as a soap-boiler ? Because my name is Hogarth.

My name is Gibbon. People are always asking me (of course, sarcastically), why I do not make an effort to keep up the literary celebrity of the family. The idea has certainly presented itself, even before it was suggested ; but what can I do ? By a singular fatality, or coincidence, I have devoted all my studies to the subject of ancient Rome. I believe I could write some very instructive commentaries upon the works of Niebuhr, and other recent historians ; and I once went so far as to prepare a few sheets of the manuscript, which, of course, were never published. After much deliberation I put them in the fire. And why ? Because my name is Gibbon.

My name is Watt. I am a working-man, and I have lived much in smoky, manufacturing towns. I have seen a thousand locomotive engines collected under a shed ; I have walked through miles of revolving-wheels, rising and falling cranks, whirling straps, and hissing valves ; and I think there are many things that yet require to be improved. I have made drawings ; I have ventured upon sug-

gestions ; and, once or twice, I have constructed a model. These things never came to anything, for I had no heart to proceed. There is small wonder in this. My name is Watt.

My name is Blackstone. I have been five-and-thirty years in a lawyer's office ; and I ought to know something about law. I do know something about law. I think the statutes at large the finest comic work in the English language. Whenever I feel dull myself, or think my family want rousing, I take home a volume of this curious work to read, and it always puts every one into a good humour. I am a practical man, and know the working of the law. I could write some valuable legal essays upon law and practice, but there is one thing that will always deter me. My name is Blackstone.

My name is Milton. I could produce an epic poem—or half a dozen—if I set my mind upon it. They are not the most difficult things in English composition (we used to do fragments of them at school) though they are extremely difficult to dispose of when finished. Publishers avoid them with an instinctive dread, unless they are at least a hundred years old. They find no sale on the railway book-stalls ; and the men who compose them generally live on the kindness of their friends. If I were to write upon lofty subjects, until the hairs of my few readers stood on end, the old boys (I allude to the classical epic writers) would still gain the day. I cannot afford to live upon prospective fame, while coke, coals, wood, and potatoes, remain at their

present prices. I am now a newspaper reporter. I might have tried my epic hand, during my leisure hours ; but one obstacle has always stood in my way. My name is Milton.

My name is Purcell. I have composed one or two popular songs under a carefully maintained incognito, but I never had the courage to venture further. The risk is greater than the pleasure ; and I live in daily fear of even these slight compositions being hurled at my head with yells of disapprobation. Happy Smith ; fortunate Jones ! You can indulge your taste for inventive harmony without any chance of being tormented with ungenerous comparisons ; while I shall go down to my grave with many silent symphonies and oratorios—because my name is Purcell.

My name is Garrick. I have elocutionary skill, an agreeable presence, a knowledge of stage-craft, a strong conception of character, and a sympathy with every form of the drama ; but I have never got further than the prompter's box. My illustrious namesake is famous for hanging between tragedy and comedy ; and this has proved a fatal obstacle to me. My first appearance would have been too good an opportunity for the critics to let slip ; a feigned name in the bills would not have saved me long. "Like his ancestor," they would have said, "he hangs between the two great divisions of the drama ; but, unlike his ancestor, he is incapable of reaching either." The fear of this antithesis has kept me in a private sphere. A prompter I have been, and

a prompter I shall die ; for my name, unfortunately, is Garrick.

Better to be born with one leg, one arm, one eye—better to be a foundling castaway, without a home or a title, than to bear the name of one of those great human monuments, the standard celebrities of the past.

TOO LATE.

I AM a punctual man ; nervously, fretfully, painfully punctual. If I have an engagement on business or pleasure, I prepare to keep it some hours before the time appointed, and am totally unable to think of anything, or do anything until it is over. I have a marvellous faculty for believing that my watch must have stopped, or that the clocks in the house are not strictly regulated by the most approved standard of time. I arrive at theatres, and places of public entertainment about half a day before the doors are ever opened. I am always the first stranger at a ball or a dinner-party, although I know in the one case I shall have to dance in the first quadrille, and in the other, I shall have to bear the awful weight of the early attempts at conversation. If, in the performance of my social duties, I go to a funeral, my painfully punctual habit carries me there long before the necessary gloomy officials have taken possession of the house, and sometimes before the chief performers in the melancholy play have made up their faces, and put on the regulation garb of woe. If I am staying at a country inn, and have given orders to the "boots" to be called at an early hour to meet a coach, or a railway train, I get feverish snatches

of sleep during the short, restless night, and am up and dressed long before the required knocking takes place at my chamber door. If I am waiting in the coffee-room for the one omnibus in the town, appointed to convey passengers to and from the railway, I have paid my bill hours before it was necessary, and am standing nervously at the window with my watch in one hand, and my Bradshaw in the other, wondering at the reckless stupidity of the men in charge of the vehicle, who allow, as it seems to me, about two minutes to run a distance of nearly two miles from the hotel to the station.

My morbid punctual temperament leads me to seek my principal mental amusement in feeding in imagination upon pictures of being too late under the most trying circumstances. I love to suppose myself in all possible painful positions arising from delay, carelessness, and procrastination. I fancy myself in a cab, miserably jammed up in a long line of carts and waggons in the midst of the great struggling city. Ages seem to pass away, and yet the wedged vehicles and howling drivers move not an inch; and I hear an hour tolling from the tower of a neighbouring church, every stroke of which goes like a nail into my brain. At that instant I see an anxious, weeping face whirled away from a distant railway, over the sea, to a remote land; never, perhaps, to greet me again in this world. On I go when it is too late, to find a dreadful stillness, where all was noise and excitement a short half-hour before; to find a clear platform, closed

gates, careless porters, and no one to whom to unburden a heavy, self-reproaching heart.

Sometimes I fancy myself arriving at a picturesque spot in a country celebrated for its beauty all over the world. I am not seeking for mountains, cascades, rocks, forests, nor ruined castles ; but for one whom I have been struggling to reach for many weary days. How harsh and cold sounds the precise voice of the hotel book-keeper, when he tells me that the one I am in search of started that morning for England, and left no word or sign ? I wander about the town from that moment, like a drunken man, listless, aimless, and with eyes closed to all the natural attractions of the place. The consciousness of a few ill-spent hours in another spot, blackens the blue sky, and makes discordant the music of the waterfalls.

I imagine myself far from the busy clatter of railways in some small country town in the very heart of England, the requirements of whose humble traffic are fully satisfied by a coach running twice a week to the borders of civilization. I retire to rest early in order that I may rise in time to catch this bi-weekly vehicle that passes through the town or village at the eccentric hour of four in the morning. I have taken the precaution to lay a whole train of instructions at the feet of the boots, chambermaid, and waiter, about calling me at three o'clock precisely. The waiter is considered to be very safe, and the chambermaid is looked upon as a person in whom dependence may be placed, and it is arranged

that each of these persons, or both, as the case may be, shall, immediately upon waking at any hour, arouse the boots from his lair, over the stables, that he may in his turn awaken me, and bring me the necessary hot water, etc. So far the machinery seems perfect, and I sink to sleep. When I awake, the sun is shining full into my room, and there is, for the village, a strange bustle in the principal street. I endeavour, for a moment, to collect my faculties, and my first impulse is to rush for my watch. That faithful companion tells me that it is twenty minutes to twelve in broad day, and the whole truth dawns upon my mind, that I have overslept myself and missed the coach. Six frantic pulls at the bell-rope, and the "boots" appears to defend himself by stating that he called me at the hour appointed, and that I answered, and he substantiates his statement by pointing to a mug of cold water, that was once warm, outside my bedroom door. Complaint is useless, and I have no alternative left but to spend the half-week in and about the village. Posting is out of the question, as the village does not boast a single chaise, and there is no chance of a mail-cart, or any other conveyance of an irregular kind passing through the place. There is nothing left but to settle down for three days and three nights, and endeavour to take an interest in things that are now hateful in my eyes, because forced upon me against my will. The trout-stream that pleased me so much four-and-twenty hours before, is now, in imagination, as black as a

Manchester canal; and the trout that I caught with such industry, and devoured with such avidity, then, are now more repulsive than the oily fried fish of Whitechapel. The ancient market-place (time of the Saxons), that I made such minute inquiries about the day before yesterday, is now a greater bore than Hicks's Hall, or the origin of the three balls of the Lombards. There is the old church with the Pharos tower, most venerable of all those venerable structures that are wonderfully picturesque and totally uninhabitable—crumbling old temple, mixture of the cow-shed and the early Norman styles of architecture, whose snuffy brickwork is only kept together by the ivy, and a high hill, which shelters it from the sharp winds; I was mad the other day to take photographs of it from every conceivable point of view, but now I feel disposed to tilt against it on horseback in the night, and knock it down, for the purpose of creating a sensation. The stable-boys, who idle about sucking straws the whole day through, know that I have missed the coach, and they impart their knowledge to any one willing to receive it, until I become a by-word and a joke in the village. After the second day, I get weak and imbecile; excited even by such an event as the changing of horses for the coach that passes through once a week in the opposite direction to that in which I wish to go. At last my deliverance comes, and I stay up all night this time to receive it. I think, if all the places are taken, I shall become a fit inmate for an asylum of idiots.

Too late for a coach under such circumstances is bad enough, but I can imagine a position infinitely worse.

I am a favourite comedian, the pride, the glory, the support, of a leading London theatre. In an unguarded moment I take a sudden fancy for a country trip, and run down by rail about twenty miles, and turn off for a good day's walk over the fields, the lanes, and commons. In the afternoon I return to the station calmly and leisurely to catch a train that shall deposit me in town about six in the evening. I enter the little frail hut that serves for the station where I have to embark, and my eye rests upon a broad-faced clock, the hands of which are at a quarter to seven. I look again, and find that my eyes have not deceived me; and the boy in charge of the place, in answer to my hasty questions, coolly informs me that the clock keeps London railway time, and that there is no train for two hours. I sink in horror upon the one thin, hard, narrow, wooden seat in the place, and a thousand wild schemes chase each other with fearful rapidity through my troubled brain. Solitary is the station as a witch's hut upon a heath, and nothing like a conveyance is visible on the line, except a navigator's wheelbarrow turned upside down upon a heap of gravel. My eye follows the long, thin, tapering lines of rails in the direction of London, until they pierce a clump of trees, and vanish at that distant point from my sight. Can I run along the line, and by that means reach my appointment,

even an hour later than the proper time? How repulsive everything about the country appears now, the trees, the fields, and the golden sunset; and how I hate the stillness broken only by the cawing of those dreadful rooks in the adjoining park, whose song I would give worlds to exchange for the smoke and rattle of Fleet Street. Why did I ever venture into the treacherous precincts of the picturesque, when I should have been sipping my coffee, and reading my paper in my dingy tavern? A roar and a puff of smoke, and the express train whirls by, that might have carried me to my destination in half an hour, if I could have summoned courage and physical agility to have jumped upon the roofs of the carriages as they passed under the bridge, timing my leap like an acrobat in the circus.

But I miss the golden opportunity, and am again a hopeless inmate of the solitary station, looking vacantly at the clock which has now reached the stroke of seven.

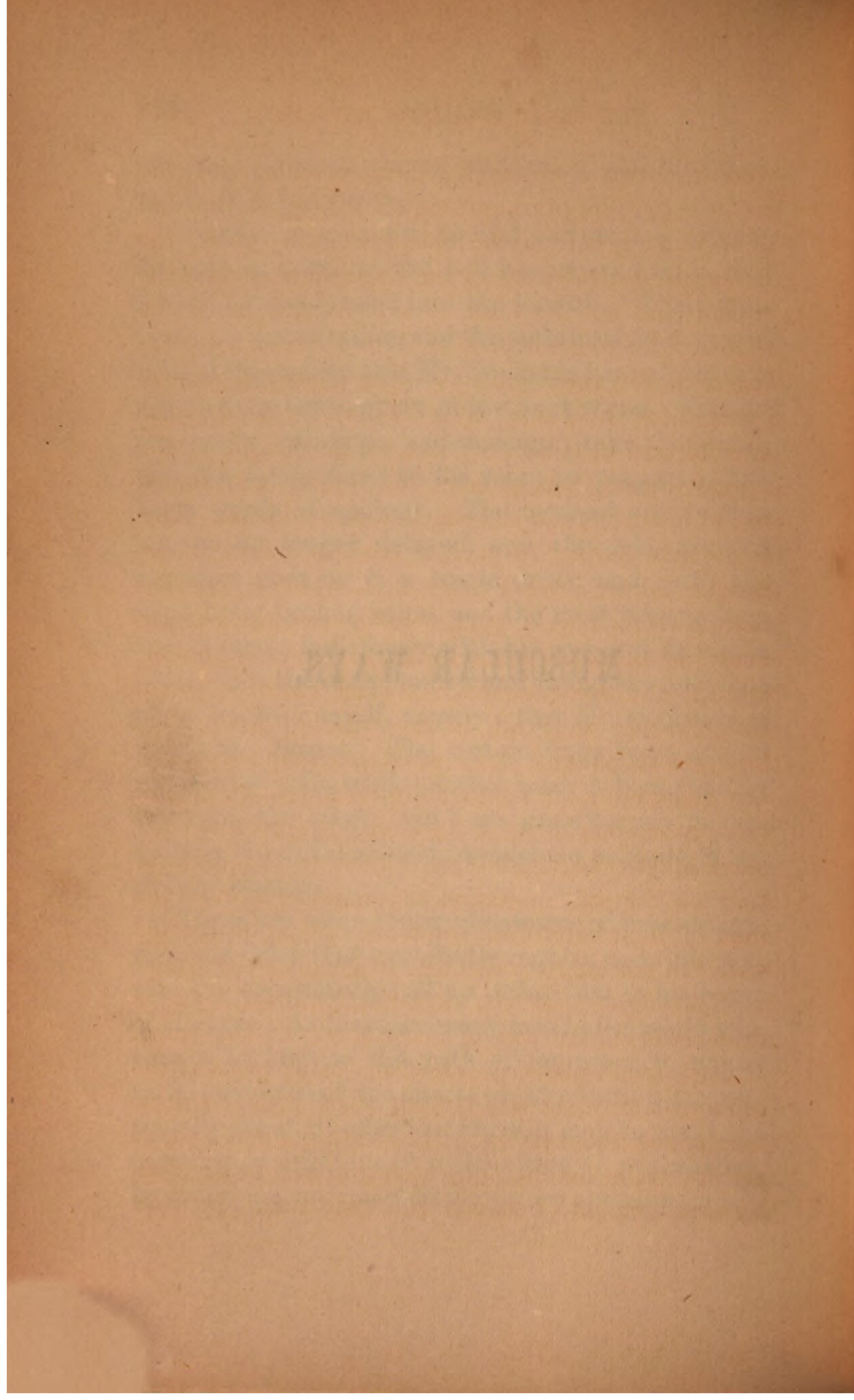
There I sit for the next two hours, while a panorama of events at the theatre passes before my mental vision. I hear the sharp click of the prompter's bell, and the voice of the call-boy, shouting "overture, gentlemen," up the staircase. I see my aged dresser, who has been used to punctual men, old actors, and slow makers-up, walking frantically about the room, wondering where I can be, when I have to go on in an elaborate costume, in the middle of the first act. He taxes his memory to ascertain whether I was ever so late before, when

the same piece was being performed, and he determines that I never was.

Unable to bear his mental torture any longer, he hobbles down to the hall-keeper, and finds that I have not yet passed into the theatre. Then commences a consultation, and the information is spread behind the curtain that Mr. Sockskin has not arrived, although he has to go on in the next scene. Prompter, actors, call-boys, and manager, take the alarm, and the latter dives to his room to prepare a few hasty words of apology. The moment arrives that can be no longer delayed, and the pale, nervous manager goes on in a comic dress, and, with the most heart-broken voice, and the most piteous face, that contrast ludicrously with his gay and facetious attire, tells the disappointed and indignant audience all he knows himself, namely : that Mr. Sockskin is not in the theatre. The curtain rings down amidst a torrent of yells, while another piece is being hastily put upon the stage, and I am gnawing my fingernails in the enforced and unwelcome solitude of the railway station.

These are some of the phantasms of procrastination and delay that a morbidly regular man like myself will occasionally call up before him in his hours of idleness. As there are many men in the world who cannot be kept in the path of temperance, unless awful examples of the effects of intoxication are continually paraded before their eyes, it may be that I unconsciously drill myself in the virtue of punctuality, by indulging my imagination in the opposite vice.

MUSCULAR WAYS.



THE GREAT PUGILISTIC REVIVAL.

THERE was a period, not more than some twelve months ago, when most of us thought we could never publicly state that we had seen a prize-fight. We had some notion that the "Ring" was dead; and that its ropes and stakes had never been properly disinterred since their burial, some years back, at Mousley Hurst. We had some notion that its exhibitions were illegal, and that its professors were compelled to live upon the traditions of the past, and bite their moth-eaten boxing-gloves in pugilistic bar-parlours. It is probable that we did not regard these professors as a down-trodden race, because we considered them at war with our present civilization. We looked upon them as melancholy relics of a departed fashion—as men who persisted in supplying an article that the public no longer called for or desired. The present writer, for one, set them down, in his notes for a great history of England, as having practically gone out with watchmen, oil-lamps, and stage-coaches.

During the last five years, however, the World (meaning of course the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland) has witnessed many full-blown revivals, and, last among them and not least, a thorough revival of Pugilism. There has seldom

been any demonstration so sudden, so successful, and so complete. I have seen the late contest between the immortal Sayers and the immortal Heenan, apologetically described as an "exceptional event." The journalist was timid, and was feeling his way. I have also noticed a little shyness on the part of certain distinguished spectators of the battle, who gave the Ring the sanction of their presence, but not the sanction of their names. A few more of these exceptional events may dispel all such mock modesty.

From the first moment when the late exceptional event—the international prize-fight—began to assume the aspect of a great and coming fact, there was the shallowest possible attempt on all sides to keep up appearances. People remarked very mildly that such disgraceful spectacles ought to be stopped, and immediately staked two to one that the Englishman would beat the American. A member or two in the House of Commons tamely asked the Home Secretary what he intended to do, and his reply was generally to the effect that he would try to keep up appearances. The powers of the metropolitan police were put in force, and they kept up appearances by pushing the training combatants into the country. Local constabulary forces, finding that they also were expected to behave with superficial decency, hunted the American (not very chivalrously, seeing that they might have hunted the Englishman), until he was bound over to keep the peace, with two sureties, to the extent of a hundred pounds. That extremely useful end attained, they retired, like

good men who had thoroughly done their duty in keeping up appearances.

When I went out into the frosty air, instead of going comfortably to bed, about one o'clock, a.m., on Tuesday morning, the seventeenth of April, 1860, I held a railway ticket in my hand, that was printed to keep up appearances. A journey from London Bridge to nowhere and back, by a special four o'clock train, was all that I was guaranteed by this slip of cardboard, in return for the sum of three pounds sterling. For all this seeming mystery the railway company knew that I knew I was going to the great prize-fight; the policeman who saw me close my street-door at that unseemly hour knew that I was going to the great prize-fight; the cabman who drove me to my destination was bursting with intelligence of the great prize-fight; and the crowd who assembled round the railway station were either going with me to the great prize-fight, or had come to see me go to the great prize-fight. There was an affectation of secrecy about the movements of some of the travellers, a reflection of the many eye-winkings they must have seen for the last few days; and there was an affectation of caution on the part of the railway company in dividing the passengers, and admitting them simultaneously at different entrances. These passengers moved silently along the passages, and across the platforms, as if they were trespassers upon the company's property, who had stolen in while the directors were asleep, and were about to run away with

the rolling stock, with the connivance of a small number of the railway officers. The anxious, threatening glances that were cast upon unknown people, and the many whispered inquiries as to who was, or was not a detective policeman, gave a very pretty burglarious tone to the whole station for at least an hour before daybreak. The farce was extremely well-acted, and appearances were carefully kept up to the last. The favoured railway had been known for months (it was the first that was ever mentioned in connection with the fight); the very spot upon which the battle was to take place had been confided to hundreds for days; and the morning, the hour, and the point of departure, had been openly sold like any commodity in the market. It was all a preposterous keeping up of appearances. The fact is, there was no public desire ever manifested to stop the contest, but a very strong desire to hear that it had been fairly fought out. In the face of such a feeling the law was paralyzed; its function not being to make a whole people more virtuous than they really are. The nation has no logical complaint against the law for standing still on this occasion, but only for its ridiculous pretence of being constantly on the alert.

There were never, perhaps, so many passengers assembled on a railway platform, who knew and addressed each other by familiar Christian names. The whole train might have been taken for a grand village excursion, but for those unmistakable faces that rested in the folds of the carriage cushions,

under the dim light of the carriage lamps. The small eyes and heads, the heavy jaws, and the high cheek-bones, were hung out, like candid signboards, to mark the members of the fighting-trade. The two or three hundred Americans, and the small sprinkling of aristocracy and visitors were not sufficient to modify, in any perceptible degree, the thoroughly animal character of the train.

I obtained a seat in a rather overloaded double compartment of a second-class carriage. Behind me were a live lord, a live baronet, a member of Parliament, the very gentlemanly editor of a distinguished sporting paper which has always done its utmost in the cause of fair play and honest dealing, an aristocratic Scotchman, a clergyman of the Church of England, and a renowned poet of the tender passions. By the side of me was a young, cheerful, round-faced Australian settler, who had travelled fifteen thousand miles to see the fight, and to transact a little business of minor importance. His dress was light, his manner self-reliant, and he looked the kind of man to go round the world unencumbered with luggage, with a cigar in his mouth, and his hands in his pockets. Opposite this passenger was a mild, long-faced, blinking gentleman, of Jewish aspect, who talked very fluently, and seemed to know all the minor deities of the ring. By his side was a drowsy and ragged member of the fighting craft, whose prospects seemed blighted, and whose scalp had been taken by the immortal Sayers in a battle some eight years before.

The labour of keeping up the conversation in the carriage, rested chiefly upon the Australian settler and the talkative Jew. The aristocracy seemed shy. They were diffident, perhaps, of their sporting knowledge, or were sleepy from having been up all night.

"I saw a good fight in Melbourne," said the Australian, "about a week afore I left."

"*Did* you?" returned the talkative Jew.

"There's a fortune there," said the Australian, confidently, "for any man about eight stun nine."

The drowsy fighting-man, with blighted prospects, slowly opened one eye.

"There's no good man there," continued the Australian, "under nine stun."

"How about Fibbing Billy?" asked the talkative Jew.

"Used up."

"Joss Humphrey?"

"Bounceable: wants it taken out of him. Fights at ten stun; gives any man a stun, but won't strip for less than a thousand pounds."

"What name?" asked the blighted prize-fighter, this time opening both eyes, and becoming languidly interested in the conversation.

"Joss Humphrey," answered the Australian settler.

"Ah!" returned the blighted prize-fighter, relapsing into drowsiness. Australia seemed a long way off, and capital did not appear to be forthcoming. It was an opening for a smart, active young man, but he was not in a position to avail himself of it.

“Nick Muffles could tackle him,” remarked the talkative Jew, addressing himself, almost confidentially, to the blighted prize-fighter.

“Ye-s,” was the drawling answer, finished off with a yawn.

“Nick’s clever,” said the Jew.

“Ah!” returned the prize-fighter.

“Ain’t he artful?”

“Ah!”

“Don’t he get away?”

“And keep away!”

“But ain’t it smart?”

“Ah!”

After this favourable review of their absent friend’s fighting qualities, the blighted prize-fighter made a few observations in praise of Nature before he again closed his eyes. He seemed to be an admirer of day-break, and a lover of gardens. The Australian kept up the conversation with the Jew by inquiring after many old prize-fighters whom he had known before he emigrated. Some were dead, some had thrived, some had disappeared. They were all asked after by affectionate Christian names, like many actors, and most comic singers. The pugilistic profession seems never to have had more than two “Misters” in its ranks: the late ex-champion, “Mr.” Gulley, M.P. for Pontefract; and the late ex-champion, “Mr.” Jackson, teacher of boxing, and one of the coronation pages to King George the Fourth.

As our journey continued through Kent, and into Surrey, we were amused by seeing many official

scarecrows, keeping up appearances by being posted along the line. A few blue-nosed policemen at the stations; four other shivering policemen under a clump of trees; a few galloping police-officers, taking equestrian exercise on the coach-road below; represented the winking majesty of the law. Their faces showed the make-believe character of their opposition to the exceptional event.

When, after a journey of two hours, we were set down at the Farnborough station, it struck me that no more appropriate fighting-ground could have been chosen throughout England. We were near the great military camp of Aldershot—a place where thirty thousand warriors are always studying how best to kill and to destroy. They belong to a great European prize-fighting association, which boasts of some three millions of active members; by the side of whom the puny company of professed pugilists sink into contempt.

The appearance of our train, and of the passengers who hurriedly alighted from it, was a signal to some of the scared farmers to barricade their dwellings. They knew that fifteen hundred people might prove a dangerous invading army, pushed along as they had been by the strong metropolitan authorities into the feeble arms of the local police.

A muddy tramp over half a mile of marshy meadow land, where we had to jump over small ditches, and struggle through hedges, brought us, at last, to the field selected for the battle. The stakes were driven in with wooden mallets, and the ropes were

adjusted by a veteran prize-fighter, about seventy years old—a sage of a hoary and venerable aspect. Around the ring, when formed, we ranged ourselves in a very eager, selfish, noisy, expectant, brutal mob. There was no one man there who could say I am more refined than my neighbour. For the time being we were all equal, and our country was anxiously waiting behind us to read an account of everything we were about to see. There were dukes, lords, marquises, clergymen, actors, singers, managers, authors, reporters, painters, and poets, mixed with plain country gentlemen, military officers, legislators, lawyers, barristers, merchants, card-sharpers, fathers of families who brought their sons, thieves, fighting-men, trainers, horse-dealers, doctors, publicans, contractors, feather-weights, light-weights, middle-weights, heavy-weights, Americans of all classes, Irishmen of several classes, and Scotchmen also. Scarcely an art, a profession, or a class was unrepresented. Later in the morning, when the country was aroused, we had farm labourers, women, country girls, and little children, a few policemen—still keeping up appearances—and a country idiot, with helpless hands and feeble legs and gaping mouth, who was the only innocent, irresponsible spectator of the fight. A number of active visitors swarmed up the slender trees which surrounded the meadow, whence they looked down upon the ring, like staring and grinning apes. There was even a timid old gentleman present, who, rather than stay away, had hired two professional fighting-men to protect him.

When the immortal Sayers stepped into the ring, at about seven o'clock in the morning, he was received, like a popular performer, with a round of applause. His immortal face was a deep sallow brown, and looked like a square block of walnut wood. His expression was even a little more strongly marked for pugilism than that of most of his craft. He was slightly nervous upon facing the company.

His opponent, the immortal Heenan, next entered the ring, to be received with quite as much enthusiasm as the English champion. He looked much fairer than Sayers in the face, and was equally nervous. His portraits had flattered him in the eyes of the British public. There are two styles of nose which all prize-fighters must be content to select from—one, presenting a flat, triangular appearance; the other, indented near the tip, and slightly turned up, so that you could hang a key upon it. The immortal Heenan had a moderate nose of the last pattern.

The two immortal men shook hands, and seemed to inquire cordially after each other's health, which was the signal for another round of applause. They eyed each other curiously and reflectively, as they had never met before.

The ring-keepers—some twenty selected pugilists with long sticks, of whom some were afterwards disgraced for grossly neglecting their duty—were now very busy in arranging the visitors: causing those in front, who had purchased inner-ring tickets, at ten shillings each, for the benefit of the P.B.A. (Prize-fighters' Benevolent Association), to sit down upon

the wet turf, their railway rugs, or camp-stools that were selling at a sovereign apiece. One indefatigable caterer openly lamented the loss of a ten-pound note through his not having brought down a few boxes for gentlemen to stand upon. The country people seemed to make little harvest of the general excitement, except in the sale of oranges. The thieves were very busy, and the Americans were their greatest victims. The picking of pockets, however, is no more peculiar to the prize-ring than to popular chapels.

Rounds of applause were very freely bestowed at every opportunity. There was one when the immortal Sayers took off his coat and shirt; there was another when the immortal Heenan did the like; there was a tremendous burst of satisfaction when the two men, in full fighting order, stripped to the waist, and advanced towards the "scratch" in the centre of the ring. They looked firm, muscular, and cheerful, the result of their training; but the constitution is not improved by these violent changes from indulgence and idleness, to temperance and enforced exercise. Consumption and dropsy are common amongst professional pugilists, and sometimes the two diseases combine. Everything in training is sacrificed to showy muscle and wind.

There was a ceremony of tying the combatants' colours—two gaudy pocket-handkerchiefs—to the stakes; there was another ceremony of shaking hands between seconds and champions; there was another ceremony of tossing for choice of "corners," or position in the ring. There were almost as many

ceremonies as at a coronation. Everything was conducted according to certain forms and rules, almost superstitiously observed.

The choice of the corner was won by the American, and he took his place. His back was to the sun—a bright, glaring sun—and his ground was slightly higher than that of his adversary. In stature he is six feet one and a half inch high; and besides being five inches taller than Sayers, he is, of course, heavier, and eight years younger.

The two immortal heroes of the hour stood up before each other in the most approved attitudes. Their left sides were advanced; their right arms were laid across their chests; their left arms were thrown out and drawn back, like the pawing leg of a horse. Their visitors watched every movement, for the present, in breathless silence; while their seconds peered at them from opposite corners, like wicket-keepers in a cricket-field. There was a forced laugh on each champion's face, that was meant to be agreeable. Their left feet kept tapping the ground, in a kind of dancing step; their heads were frequently thrown back, or bobbed down; and they skipped from side to side after aiming or parrying a blow. At last the first stage in the fight was reached, amidst uproarious applause; the immortal Sayers had succeeded in drawing "first blood" from his antagonist.

These movements were repeated with such slight variation, that pugilism, like most games of skill, must be pronounced monotonous. It was some

little time before the next great stage in the battle was reached, and the first knock-down blow was received by the Englishman.

The excitement round the ring now began to break out, and hoarse shouts were exchanged from each side. Enormous sums of money were loudly offered, by rough and shabby-looking people, upon either champion, and aristocratic eyes stared intensely through many eye-glasses. Unruly visitors leaped up from the grass, and danced wildly near the ropes; while the ring-keepers applied their sticks, without stint or favour, to the visitors' heads and shoulders. The same movements were repeated again and again by the champions, with pretty nearly the same results. The immortal Sayers was knocked down at least twenty times by the immortal Heenan, or fell, humouring his blows. The turf was soft, and he had to counterbalance his many disadvantages by "science," or careful tactics. He was always picked up by his seconds in the most affectionate manner, and carried to his corner, like a Guy Fawkes, to be sponged.

An hour soon passed in this way, without any signs of the battle drawing to a conclusion. The immortal Sayers's face, with the sun full upon it, was like a battered copper tea-kettle; his right arm was stiff and helpless; and he was freely spitting blood. The immortal Heenan's right eye was closed-up with a huge lump of blue flesh, produced by the Englishman's well-directed and determined blows; his upper lip, too, was puffed out, as if

there were six rows of gums and teeth behind it. When Sayers gave a telling hit, he stopped, and looked inquisitively at his adversary, to see what damage he had done: and after Heenan had knocked his opponent down, he turned to his seconds, threw up both his arms, and opened his swollen mouth in a gasping manner.

The excitement was now at its height; and a constant roar of voices was kept up round the ring. People at the back made desperate attempts to mount the shoulders of those in front. Nervous betting men, with heavy stakes upon the contest, got out of the crowd, and walked about the meadow. The wind hissed through the trees, and the hundreds who clung to the bending branches shouted loudly for each combatant, according to the tide of battle. A few county policemen came upon the field, to keep up appearances, and, when they timidly ventured to push into the ring, were quietly hustled on one side by the savage spectators. A few oaths were heard, but not many; the pale faces round the inner circle became paler, the compressed lips more compressed; bets of various amounts were still loudly offered, and loudly taken; outsiders leaped up and down with ceaseless activity; the smacking blows of the combatants were heard, their visible effect was described to excited inquirers, and the news passed from mouth to mouth; opinions fluctuated; the Englishman was abused or praised, so was the American; the referee was nearly smothered; and the only men who really seemed to retain calmness

were the two combatants, their seconds, and the leading prize-fighters present. When, at the end of two hours, and in the thirty-seventh round, the American got the neck of the Englishman across the rope, it was not the fault of the general multitude that murder was not presented to them as a crowning treat for their money. The American was requested to "hold him" by a thousand voices on the ground, and in the trees; but at the height of the uproar the ring was broken, the referee was forced out of his place, and all became wild confusion. This is no new ending to such a contest. The referee was the editor already referred to, who for years has done as much as a gentleman in resolute earnest could, to imbue these men with principles of honour, justice, and self-restraint. Surely there is something wrong, after all, in the "Noble Art" when he is set at naught when most needed, and when the well-conducted men among the pugilists cannot rely upon their own brethren to preserve a clear stage and no favour, but are forced to the declaration (as they have been in this case) that even the men of their careful selection are not to be trusted with the limited responsibility of keeping the Ring.

This fight has been declared "a draw," and a draw it certainly was in every sense of the word. It drew hundreds of people from many parts of the globe; it drew thousands from their beds; it drew four or five thousand pounds sterling for a special railway train, one half of which sum will be divided, by arrangement, between the two men. It drew

all England from its usual business engagements about mid-day, on the memorable Tuesday, the 17th of April, 1860. It drew thirty-five bales, containing two tons of newspapers (the largest number ever shipped aboard one ship), to America, at the earliest possible moment. It drew several distinguished mercantile bodies into subscribing testimonials for the English champion; it drew uncountable numbers of people into supporting a great pugilistic revival.

It has been my misfortune to see many chance fights of a determined character—one particularly between two navvies in a sewer—and though there was less “science” about them, less (as one may say) of the ring dancing-master, there was more real “punishment.” I find it difficult to reconcile the appearance of both Sayers and Heenan, the day after the fight, with the accounts that were printed of the awful character of the battle. There must surely be a little exaggeration somewhere—perhaps everywhere?

Think what the unconscious exaggeration floating about is likely to be, when the exaggeration of wild sentiment on this subject gets Stock Exchanges, and Mercantile Exchanges, and heaven knows what agglomerations of sensible and sober men together, to receive the immortal Sayers with high public distinction, and shower money on him. I do not doubt that the sturdy and bold champion of England is a thoroughly good fellow in his way and in his place; I am very far from taking on myself to assert that, within those limits, he has not

his honest uses ; but I cannot forbear asking now, after a pause of a few months, when there has been time to cool, whether this great pugilistic Revival, in this extravagant aspect, is not a new and noteworthy instance of a great moral epidemic? Is it not well that we should turn it to advantage by so accounting and remembering it? Then, when we observe in another country not our own, the next strange contagion that may seize it, we shall be more tolerant thereof. Then, when some new frenzy sets in here, we shall not fall to tearing one another to pieces about it, or to wresting Heaven and Earth out of shape to account for it, but shall say "it is a fever—an infection—will soon expend its force as a disease, and go the mortal way of the two immortal prize-fighters."

To keep up appearances is a constant British effort. In the keeping up of appearances concerning this fight, the thing has been reduced to a point so transparently absurd and hypocritical, that the force of humbug can go no further. Will any member of Parliament, who was at the fight, be so exemplary, therefore, as to "back his opinions," like a man and a Briton? Will he protest against the professors and amateurs of pugilism being steamed down a railway and hunted over ploughed fields to form a ring, merely for the formal exhibition of a scarecrow law? Will he give notice of a motion for enabling himself and me to see the next fight, in some commodious public building in London hired for the occasion, surrounded by every convenience and every comfortable appliance?

THE PUGILISTIC DRAMA.

THERE was once a gentleman of learning and position, whose name I forget at the present moment, who said, "I never wish to study any other history of England than Shakespeare's plays. They present me with clearer pictures of the times and manners they depict; they lay bare more completely the springs of human action; and they are more exact in dates and the sequence of events than most of the ponderous historical volumes I can find in my library."

Allowing for a little love of paradox—a little fancy for appearing singular—there may probably be some truth at the bottom of these remarks; and, any way, there must be many people existing in the world who never *will* study the history of their country unless it is presented to them in the shape of an amusing drama. If it is necessary that such people should be educated in this particular branch of knowledge, it is fortunate that Shakespeare's plays are so popular and so historically reliable; and it is also fortunate that the successors of the great dramatist—the little knot of highly-talented gentlemen who call themselves the "Dramatic Authors' Society," and their more humble, or less famous brethren, who supply the passing dramas for the minor theatres—are always willing to "illustrate"

the times in which we live and move, according to their talents and their opportunities.

As one of the great events of the present year* is the "fight for the championship," it is not surprising that the watchful dramatist has seized it for literary material, some years, perhaps, in advance of the regular historian. At the very moment when Thomas Sayers is a leading man—when he has been praised from the pulpit and by the journals, and when he has returned the compliment by praising the journals for their literary genius and descriptive talent—when he has been *fêted* on board the Queen's ships, and received on the Liverpool Exchange with more honours and enthusiasm than were bestowed upon Lord Gough on his victorious return from India—when he has been declared the "Mincing Lane Pet," with a retainer of a hundred guineas, and the "Capel Court Slasher," with another retainer of a similar amount—when he has received more money for "colours," and shares of the railway fighting-train, than ever any professional gladiator received before—when he has been made the object of a subscription by the House of Lords, another subscription by the House of Commons, many more subscriptions by different clubs and classes in London, in Paris, and throughout the provinces, and a wide extra subscription, amounting to more than four thousand pounds sterling, that is led off by a noble lord who sends a hundred pounds, and closed by a little girl, under eleven

* 1860.

years of age, who sends sixpence—when all these honours and profits have been heaped upon the head of a single individual, it is not surprising that the historical stage should select him as the hero of many dramas, and seek to embody the leading incidents of his career. This “noble” pugilist, after several weeks of decent diplomatic reserve, has become reconciled to his American opponent, and the two countries seem to breathe again. We are now able to attend to our ordinary political and social business, as the two combatants have retired hand-in-hand to the country, for the profit and pleasure of a “sparring-tour.” I have not heard, nor, I believe, has the respectable editor of our leading sporting contemporary, that any offer has been made to Sayers to stand for any town or borough as a member of Parliament. What is Pontefract about on this occasion? It was satisfied with “Mr.” Gully, ex-champion and publican for many years, and why not try Sayers? Its name, when translated into English, signifies “broken-bridge,” and shows a philological sympathy with pugilism.

The Olympic Theatre was the first to recognize the importance of the great pugilistic event, and to deal with it from a farcical point of view, in the piece called *B. B.* More than one of the minor houses were not slow to follow so high and so successful an example; but it was reserved for the Victoria Theatre, in the New Cut, Lambeth, to present its patrons with a drama, half “domestic,” half historical, that may be fairly taken as having ex-

hausted the subject. This drama contains much that is known, with much that was previously unknown; and the following is a fair copy of the play-bill, omitting the perishable part—the names of the actors:—

THE CHAMPION'S BELT ;

OR, THE RING AND ITS MORAL.

Sir Harry Headlong	Mr.—.
Tom Sayers	Mr.—.
John Heenan	Mr.—.
Old Joe Sayers	Mr.—.
Augustus Toebiter.....	Mr.—.
The Nimble Grasshopper.....	Mr.—.
Harry Brunton	Mr.—.
Owen Swift	Mr.—.
Goliah	Mr.—.
<i>Police Detectives, &c.</i>	
Mary Sayers	Mrs.—.
Mrs. Sayers.	Miss—.
Shorts	Miss—.

Act. I.—Exterior of Owen Swift's Tavern.

Tableau 1.—Previous to the Fight.

Tableau 2.—Flooer No. 1.

Tableau 3.—Tom Sayers. Hurrah! Street. The Pedestrians.

The Champion's Belt! Old Sayers's Lodging!

Tableau 4.—The First Meeting! Shake Hands.

The American's Colours. The Toebiter and Tom.

The Toebiter rescued by Shorts.

Tableau 5.—The Meeting! Owen Swift's Parlour.

Three Cheers for Tom Sayers! The Belt!

The Benicia Boy! Hurrah!

The Colours of the Champion of England!

Grand Tableau: and End of First Act.

Act. II.—The Training. The Toebiter up to his Work.

The Nimble Grasshopper. The Benicia Boy!

Heenan's Lodgings. Yankee Doodle. The Detective.

The Escape! The Fight!!

Tableau.—Over the Ropes. The Death-bed of Heenan.

Grand Tableau.

The drama opens with a representation of a street, from which we learn that "Owen Swift's Tavern" (in Tichborne Street, Haymarket) is a large private house, with a handsome portico, standing in an extensive square. Immediately opposite this mansion is a cobbler's hut, not unlike a blacksmith's forge, in the occupation of "Old Joe Sayers," shoe-mender, and father of the "Champion." Here we have the visible emblems of two opposing principles: the house, or "tavern," is typical of idleness and dissipation; the hut is typical of industry and sobriety. Before the door of the first are a few betting men and hangers-on of the "Ring," including a wild, gay nobleman in a battered white hat and blucher boots, described in the play-bill as "Sir Harry Headlong;" while before the door of the second are the hard-working, perspiring "Joe Sayers" senior, the frugal and homely "Mrs. Sayers," and the virtuous and interesting "Mary Sayers," their daughter, forming together a beautiful "tableau," or family picture.

We learn, from a rather general conversation, that Sayers senior, while he retains some physical vestiges of muscular development, and the power of giving a blow from the shoulder, is opposed to the ring and all its associations, and that he has com-

manded his daughter "Mary" to disown all relationship with her brother "Tom," until he is found to walk once more in the paths of industry. We also learn that Sayers junior, otherwise "our noble Tom," otherwise "our glorious champion," has generously offered to maintain his father out of the gains of his pugilistic profession; but it is almost needless to say that the offer has been firmly though respectfully declined. Much striking of a lapstone, and much flourishing of an old boot take place, as pantomimic indications that the independent old cobbler is not yet incapable of earning his livelihood.

It appears, at this period of the Sayers history, that "Mary Sayers" has attracted the attention of the wild, gay nobleman, "Sir Harry Headlong," and though, strictly speaking, not persecuted with his addresses, she is chased by him round the square, or street, before described, and roughly embraced, in broad daylight, on the Queen's highway. It also appears that "John Heenan," the American Champion, who has arrived in England, is under an obligation to a "family bearing the name of Sayers," for some help rendered to him some years ago, in some part of America, and he is not the man to forget those in his prosperity who never forgot him in his adversity. There are also some traces of a tender attachment between him and "Mary Sayers," who only knows him, for the present, under the assumed name of "John Carter."

The unseemly conduct of the wild, gay nobleman, in the Queen's highway, gives a happy opportunity

to "John Carter," otherwise "John Heenan," of showing that his mouth is not crammed full of empty sentiments, and of introducing himself in a triumphant manner to the family he is in search of. He enters the square, or street, at the very moment when "old Joe Sayers" has been ruthlessly pushed aside, when "Mary Sayers" is being unwillingly embraced by the wild, gay nobleman, and with one blow of his stout American arm, he "doubles up" the feeble aristocratic victim of dissipation. The remarks of "John Carter," otherwise "John Heenan," after performing this feat, are worthy of a place amongst the maxims of school copy-books.

The noble American retires, after promising to visit "old Joe Sayers" and his daughter at their lodgings, and we are introduced, for the first time, to the English "Champion." He comes out of the house, or tavern, cheerful and confident. He observes that he has never yet seen his opponent, and should like to know whether he is going to fight a man or a mountain. His reception by a small but enthusiastic body of supporters is highly encouraging, and he only wishes that his father was less opposed to his profession. No matter, he will do his utmost; no man can do more. He fights for the honour of old England. A fair ring and no favour; may the best man win, and may that man be Thomas Sayers. Hurrah! Tableau the third. The pugilistic party is grouped on the left side of the stage; the shoe-mending and anti-pugilistic party, in the persons of "old Joe Sayers" and family, is grouped on the

right side of the stage. A few chords are given by the orchestra, and the scene closes.

We are next introduced to "a street," which seems, oddly enough, to be in some part of Italy (a mistake, no doubt, of the scene-shifters), and what is technically known as the "underplot" of the drama. This underplot consists of a professional pedestrian, called the "nimble grasshopper," who is supposed to be engaged in some "great match," which causes him to walk across the stage whenever it represents anything like the open air. He runs against most people, at different times, but particularly against one "Augustus Toebiter," a comic amateur of pugilism. The duty of all persons engaged in the drama is to knock down this comic amateur at every opportunity, with the exception of one "Shorts," a comic maid-servant, and her duty is to marry the comic amateur, and help to protect him. The result of this arrangement is that all the characters, except "Mary" and "Mrs. Sayers," have a fair chance of showing their skill in the art of boxing.

We will now return to the more serious and historical business of the drama. The scene changes to "old Sayers's lodging," where, true to his word, the American Champion, still disguised as "John Carter," pays his promised visit. Thomas Sayers is also there; and we learn that the first and most interesting meeting of the two opponents took place under the roof of one who was already the father of the English "Champion," and soon to be the father-

in-law of the American. The two heroes, the future brothers-in-law, shook hands—still only knowing each other as mutual friends of the family. Powerful situation! Something told them they should meet again.

“Tom Sayers” was the first to take his leave, soon followed by the American Champion. The latter, to the evident disgust of his trainer, constant attendant, and backer, “Harry Brunton,” snatched a kiss from the willing “Mary” before departing, and in so doing dropped his handkerchief—his “colours.”

“Ha!” exclaims “Mary,” as she picks up this blue-and-white object, “what is this? A handkerchief! A name in the corner! John C. Heenan, the Benicia Boy! Ha, ha! I see it all! He cannot—he must not fight my brother!”

The action of the drama now becomes more rapid. We are introduced to “Owen Swift’s parlour,” and to the company of a number of convivial supporters of pugilism. The English Champion enters, and is received with deafening cheers. He looks round the room. He makes a speech. His sentiments do honour to his head and heart. The American Champion enters, and is also received with deafening cheers. The two heroes are now formally introduced to each other. They start. “The friend of my father.” “The brother of my betrothed!” There is no drawing back. The trial is bitter, but it must be unflinchingly borne. Ah! knock for silence, unsuspecting chair-

man of the tavern table ; little do you know the mental agony that is now racking the strong frames of the "gallant Heenan" and the "glorious Tom." The American makes a speech. His sentiments also do honour to his head and heart. A noise is heard outside. The door is thrown open, and in rush "old Joe Sayers" and his daughter "Mary." They come to stop the fight. Too late, alas ! too late. It cannot be. The first act immediately closes with a "grand tableau."

The second act opens with a picture of "Tom Sayers" under "training," and we are taught all the mysteries of the "clubs," the "dumb bells," and "boxing the sack." We are next hurried to "Heenan's lodgings," where "Mary" makes yet one more attempt to dissuade her lover from fighting, but without success. He cannot withdraw from this contest with honour, and he will only promise to remember, during the battle, that "Tom Sayers" is her brother. More than this, in justice to his backers, he dare not do.

In the meantime, "old Joe Sayers" has not been idle, and communicating with certain "detectives," he has led the way to "Heenan's hiding-place," by following the footsteps of his daughter. His plans are defeated ; the American is warned, and makes his escape—in strict accordance with history—from the window. The drama now moves more rapidly still, and reminds us, in some respects, of Richard the Third, as tinkered by Colley Cibber. "Heenan" darts across the stage, in front of an

open-country picture, followed by the police authorities. "Old Joe Sayers" and his daughter "Mary" next appear, and a scene of much emotion takes place between them. A noise of many voices is heard, and it tells them that the fight has already begun in the neighbourhood. "Mary" shudders when she hears the fearful sound, and is led away gently (to music) by her father.

The next and final scene is "The Ring," where all the historical features of the fight are reproduced with diligent faithfulness. We see the numerous "falls" of the English "Champion," the "blow" that disables his "right arm," the return "blow" that he gives with his "left hand," the "struggle over the ropes," the tearing up of the "ring-poles," and the final "skipping" of the two combatants. A "grand tableau" is certainly formed by the mob round the ring—as mob and tableau, in theatrical language, generally mean the same thing—but we are at a loss to know what the play-bill means by winding up its list of scenes and incidents with what it calls "The Death-bed of Heenan." It is the only part of the promised drama left unrepresented, or unexplained, and, for the sake of English history and Victoria audiences, we should like some solution of the mystery. The thousands who flock every night to this temple of the drama are, unlike the gentleman before alluded to, who was so satisfied with the historical lessons contained in Shakspeare's plans—*they have scarcely any other teacher*. That gentleman could read and write, and cast accounts,

but, unfortunately, the bulk of a Victoria audience either possess no such accomplishments, or possess them in a very limited degree. It is too bad if the author, the stage-manager, and the printer have combined to impose upon ignorance and good-nature.*

* Reprinted from the *London Review*.

A MUSCULAR TUTOR.

BLESSED is the man who has got a hobby! He goes to bed happy; he rises in the morning with an agreeable object in view; and his thoughts during the day are wholesomely and entirely occupied.

Happy would Mr. Wheezy have been if, during the last five-and-thirty years, he had had leisure to cultivate a hobby; but as he had not, he was thrown upon his own resources, which were hardly strong enough to bear him. He had retired, after a long and successful course of industry, from a wholesale grocer's business in Budge Row, City, and for the first few months his altered situation afforded him a sensation of pleasure, which became less powerful, however, day by day, as the novelty gradually subsided.

Mrs. Wheezy had many estimable qualities, many domestic virtues, many small talents; but the art of conversation was not amongst them. Accomplishments she had none; and though foremost amongst the household gods in Mr. Wheezy's dwelling was a splendid piano in a showy case—as good as money could purchase—it was very seldom opened to the sound of melody, except when Miss Wheezy (aged nine years) thought fit to go through the first fifteen of Czerny's hundred and one exercises.

Mr. Wheezy had taken his wife to all the sights of London. They had been everywhere, and had done everything that rather fat people could do—not, of course, going up St. Paul's, or the Monument—and that source of enjoyment and occupation was closed. Mr. Wheezy began to find his mornings hang heavily on his hands; his afternoons were passed in sleep; his evenings were occupied with vacancy, or a game at "all-fours:" he retired to rest early, he rose late, he ate much, and took little exercise; and he, consequently, increased perceptibly in bulk until he reached the age of forty-eight and the weight of seventeen stone.

Mr. Wheezy attended the reading-room of a neighbouring Literary Institution every morning, for the purpose of seeing the newspapers of the day; and here he formed a speaking acquaintance with a superannuated Government clerk, who was not unlike himself in tastes, character, and habits, and from whom he acquired the hobby of the persistent riding of which I am about to lay an account before the reader. This gentleman had passed many years of his retirement in trying the effect upon his body of different medical systems. Not that he was ever really ill; on the contrary, his constitution was remarkably vigorous: but having nothing to do, he had allowed himself to imagine a variety of diseases which might at any time fall suddenly upon him, and his plan was to take a variety of remedies in advance, under the strong belief that he was fortifying his health against the day of trial. Curiosities

of diet, small doses of physic, large doses of physic, and no physic at all, eccentric performances with cold water, unusual hours of rising and going to bed, had each in their turn exercised undivided authority over him. At the time when Mr. Wheezy first became acquainted with him, he was acting under a self-imposed system of violent gymnastics.

Mr. Wheezy was just in a fit humour to become converted to any theory that promised to furnish health, exercise, and amusement combined; and, like nearly all converts, he threw himself into the proposed performance with such remarkable energy, that he soon left his master and his teachings very far indeed behind.

Mr. Wheezy looked at his two sons and his daughter, and suddenly discovered how much their physical education had been neglected. Their mental education was certainly nothing to boast of; but as this did not come within the operation of Mr. Wheezy's hobby, no notice was taken of it. The boys were fat, but not too fat for well-fed boys; and the girl took after her mother, in having a short, round figure. The girl was at once provided with back-boards, dumb-bells, and swinging clubs; the boys were encouraged to lift and throw heavy weights, to leap, fence, and even play single-stick; and a most elaborate rack, entitled a gymnasium, was erected at the bottom of the garden, upon which Mr. Wheezy led the way in teaching his children those violent arm-ricking, blood-to-the-head-sending evolutions, which were to make six-feet men and

hearty centenarians of them, and attack and vanquish corpulence and fatty degeneracy in himself.

Mr. Wheezy was as constant to his hobby as if it had been a treadmill, and he had been chained to it by necessity, and not by choice. Visitors to Mrs. Wheezy saw him out of the back drawing-room, inverted, like an acrobat, in the air, or looking at them from between his legs, in a very red and bloated condition. When the tax-gatherer or any other person called upon business, Mr. Wheezy had generally to be arrested by the servant in the midst of his rapid revolutions upon the pole, like a wheel of an engine that is suddenly stopped in full motion by the engineer. Sulkily and fretfully he went into the house, discharged the visitor with as little ceremony as possible, and returned with little delay to his favourite and engrossing recreation.

But, notwithstanding all this steady physical activity, the seventeen stone, with symptoms of fatty degeneracy, obstinately refused to be decreased, and he remained at exactly the same weight, according to the index of the best machine, even to half an ounce. It may have been that without these performances Mr. Wheezy's form would have increased in bulk, and that he ought to have congratulated himself upon attaining, by great exertion, a stationary, if not a decreasing weight. But Mr. Wheezy did not in the least entertain this view of the case, and he therefore sought another consultation with his friend at the Literary Institution.

"My dear sir," said that restless experimenter,

"I am sorry to have misled you, but the gymnasium is a great mistake."

"Indeed!" returned Mr. Wheezy, rather astonished.

"It may contribute," continued the experimenter, "to keep down corpulence—though even that is doubted by the best authorities; but it produces a variety of ills in its place, which are even more injurious to the system."

"May I ask," said Mr. Wheezy, rather anxiously, "what some of these ills are which you allude to?"

"Certainly," replied the experimenter, with the air of a well-informed man. "I don't think I need go any further when I have mentioned apoplexy."

"But," stammered Mr. Wheezy, for apoplexy was his bugbear, "you don't mean to say the gymnasium fosters this?"

"It converts a melancholy chance into a more melancholy certainty," returned the retired Government clerk, in a very decided tone. "I have sold my gymnastic apparatus to a broker in the neighbourhood."

"Is there nothing," inquired Mr. Wheezy, in a still more anxious manner, "that will stop the progress of fatty degeneracy, without inflicting the greater evil of apoplexy? My doctor tells me he can do nothing for me; I must take exercise. What exercise? I ask you, sir, what exercise?"

"There is only one thing," returned the experimenter, who was waiting to be asked, "and that is to do as I am doing—go into training."

“Training?” said Mr. Wheezy : “what is that?”

The retired Government clerk had now arrived at the desired point, and he proceeded to explain to Mr. Wheezy how he had been introduced to a man—common enough in appearance, but worth all the doctors in Europe—who undertook to bring any gentleman into a firm, muscular condition, no matter how far gone in corpulence, in the space of six weeks, or two months, for the sum of fifty pounds.”

“He was introduced to me,” said the experimenter, “by a nephew, who mixes a good deal with sporting men, and persons of that class, you know ; and I believe that this trainer has been in his time a prize-fighter, or something of that kind ; but I can answer for his treatment, and I will send him to you, if agreeable, to-morrow morning.”

Mr. Wheezy was only too glad to accept the offer ; and instead of indulging the next morning in violent evolutions upon the gymnasium poles he remained quietly in his dining-room, waiting for the appearance of the promised trainer.

About half-past ten Mr. Wheezy’s servant announced the expected visitor, who, in polite society, went by the name of Alick Sloggers, but who was better known amongst his own friends by the title of the Eel. The retired Government clerk’s description of Mr. Sloggers’s antecedents was quite correct. He had been a prize-fighter, though not of sufficient mark and importance to fight his way into the usual public-house ; and he was consequently

compelled to gain his living now by the exercise of his wits. These wits, fortunately for him—though not, perhaps, for the public—were tolerably keen; and by dog-fancying, pigeon-breeding, teaching the use of the gloves, betting occasionally upon horses, giving opinions upon the breed of bull-terriers, and, lastly, training idle, corpulent, dissatisfied gentlemen into something like good-humour with themselves, Alick Sloggers, otherwise the Eel, managed to collect a very fair income in the course of the year. He was a short man, with cropped hair, small twinkling eyes, a low forehead, a large under-jaw, very thick hands, and a very flat nose. He wore very tight corduroy trousers; a very loose coat, completely studded with small flap-covered pockets; a dark-blue shirt, with an Indian silk pocket-handkerchief slung loosely round his neck; no waistcoat; and a shaggy, dirty, drab-coloured beaver-hat. Under his arm was a small, sleek, pug-nosed spaniel; and when he entered the presence of Mr. Wheezy he slipped this dog into a large side-pocket in his coat, made a rude bobbing bow, put his hat upon the carpet by his side, and waited for instructions. He looked modest and timid; but appearances are deceptive.

“Mr. Sloggers,” began Mr. Wheezy, rather hesitatingly, “I am given to understand—that—that you have devoted much of your attention to—to the athletic culture of the human frame?”

“Beg yer pardon?” replied Mr. Sloggers, not seeming quite to understand the question.

"You profess the art of training?" asked Mr. Wheezy, in explanation.

"Train any man," said the Eel, doggedly; "don't care who he is."

The spaniel whined inside the coat-pocket at this juncture, and received a gentle tap on the head from Mr. Sloggers's corrective hand, to remind him in whose company he was.

"I have some idea," continued Mr. Wheezy, "of placing myself under your system; can I do so with perfect safety?"

"Show me," said the Eel, with thorough self-confidence, "any hinfant as it'll 'urt, an' I'll forfeit twenty pund."

"Very well," said Mr. Wheezy, assured by this unwavering assertion; "perhaps you can tell me how it is I make flesh so fast?"

"'Course I can," replied the Eel, "with 'arf a heye: your're not so much hover-fed, as blowed out wi' wash."

"Ah!" said Mr. Wheezy.

"'Arf o' that stuff you've got on you," continued the Eel, advancing to Mr. Wheezy, and grasping several pounds of the fatty covering of that gentleman's ribs, "is o' no more huse nor my little finger. If you hadn't been a nat'rally stiff-built man, you couldn't ha' staggered hunder it."

"Just as I thought," murmured Mr. Wheezy.

"You'd make a fourteen-stunner look foolish aside o' you," resumed the Eel; "and yet your proper weight's hunder twelve stun."

“So I always said,” replied Mr. Wheezy.

“If you’ll put yourself hunder me,” said the Eel, “I’ll bring yer down agen to risonable weight in a month, or know what’s what.”

Mr. Wheezy was perfectly satisfied. He understood that the diet would be strict, and the exercise, at first, rather irksome; but any such desirable result as a considerable reduction of his body was not to be attained without a struggle.

Mrs. Wheezy, who had not, from the first, approved of the gymnasium, was even less favourably inclined to this other process of training. She did not like Mr. Alick Sloggers—his voice, his manner, or his appearance; and she particularly instructed the servant to have nothing to say to him, and to see that no plate or small article of value was left lying about. When she saw the preparations being made to fit up the summer-house at the end of the garden as a temporary sitting-room and bed-room for Mr. Wheezy and his trainer, she remarked to her intimate friends and relations that all domestic comfort between herself and her husband was from that moment at an end, and that it was a bad day for them all when he turned his back upon Budge Row.

Mr. Wheezy’s dwelling was a semi-detached villa, in the most respectable and quiet part of Clapham. The enemies of the neighbourhood might accuse it of monotony; but they could not, with justice, say one word against its character. Every house looked like every other house, the people who lived there were seldom out after dusk, and the omnibuses from

the City and West-end ceased running about eight o'clock in the evening. The whole place was intensely silent, clean, and modern ; but if it could not boast any buildings of historical reputation, it was, on the other hand, perfectly free from rookeries and low characters ; and the visits of Mr. Alick Sloggers to Saccharine Lodge (Mr. Wheezy's dwelling) were not long in exciting the observation of the whole immediate neighbourhood. Mr. Wheezy's gymnasium, with the constant and eccentric performances of that gentleman upon the poles and ropes, had caused considerable gossip at many local tea-tables, which gossip was not decreased by the preparations being made by the Eel in the garden and summer-house for his two-months' campaign against corpulence and indigestion.

At the back of Saccharine Lodge was a large square paddock, which was bounded on two sides by the walls of villas, and on the other two sides by main roads. The villas that ran along these roads looked on to this paddock from the front, and the villas on the other two sides looked on to it from behind ; and as it was rather more than a mile round the inclosure, there was a large number of people nearly always gazing at it from their windows. Mr. Wheezy, acting under the advice of the Eel, who wished to secure a walking-ground as near as possible to the premises, made an agreement with the owner to rent this paddock for twelve months, and immediately had a doorway cut into it through his garden-wall.

In three days after the first interview with the Eel everything was in readiness, and Mr. Wheezy went down to his summer-house and began training. He was not allowed by Mr. Sloggers to take more than four hours' sleep at a time, although it was no slight task to arouse him at the end of these periods. He was totally cut off from tea, coffee, and rolls; from soup and fish; from hot suppers; from occasional snacks; and from his fine old crusted port, that was more ancient than the neighbourhood in which he lived. His food was strictly confined to stale bread, small draughts of porter, and the lean part of mutton chops. He was trotted round the paddock by Mr. Sloggers at all hours of the day and night; and when he returned to his humble dwelling in a very faint and perspiring condition, he was placed under a load of rugs and blankets that made him feel as if boiling in a copper of hot water. After this he was rubbed down like a horse, weighed, fed, put to bed, aroused, trotted round the paddock, blanketed, and so on, over and over again.

Many attempts were made by Mrs. Wheezy to break into the mysteries of the summer-house, and to interfere with the even course of the simple diet by the introduction of prohibited luxuries. She knew it was useless to argue with Mr. Wheezy in any way, except by attacking him through the pleasures of the table. At the end of the first week she very artfully prepared with her own hands a magnificent venison pasty, which she conveyed to her husband, accompanied with several bottles of his favourite

saucers. This was the greatest trial Mr. Alick Sloggers had had to undergo, but he was fully equal to the emergency. He met Mrs. Wheezy with a bold front at the door of the summer-house, took the tray from her trembling hands, hurled the pie over the wall into the paddock, and poured the sauces calmly out of the bottles on to a myrtle-bush at the end of the garden. Mr. Wheezy started up from his tank of flannel, and Mrs. Wheezy looked perfectly paralyzed; while the Eel put himself in an oratorical attitude, and thus addressed his employer: "Heither," said he, "I goes on with this 'ere trainin', hor else I don't. I don't care for yer money; take yer money"—(he had been securely paid in advance)—"but don't go an' hinjure my purfesshunal prospects for life!"

This appeal had the desired effect with Mr. Wheezy, who began to feel lighter, and to breathe much more freely, under Mr. Sloggers's stern but beneficial treatment; and he begged his wife, in a firm yet affectionate manner, not on any account to interfere any more with the strict diet prescribed by the best authorities upon athletic training.

Mr. Sloggers's influence over his patron increased from this day. Before another week of the training had expired, Mr. Wheezy found himself the purchaser of two pairs of large, puffy boxing-gloves, like railway buffers; and as he did not seem inclined for a set-to with his trainer, Mr. Sloggers observed that "a pair o' mittens wasn't worth a screw o' tobacker huntill the dust was

knocked orf 'em," put the gloves on the two Masters Wheezy, one Saturday afternoon, in the gymnasium, with their father's consent, and then stood at the door of the summer-house, enjoying and directing the battle. This debasing spectacle shocked the neighbours very much, especially two maiden ladies who occupied the villa on the right, and a serious gentleman who resided next door on the left. In a very short time the nose of one young gentleman began to bleed, and he immediately ran crying into the kitchen to have his face washed, where his mother saw him with the two remarkable protuberances upon his hands. This naturally drew down a well-merited burst of indignation upon the inhabitants of the summer-house.

"If their father thinks proper," said Mrs. Wheezy, "to give himself up to low habits and disreputable company, I'm determined that my children shall not be contaminated; this very night they shall go to their aunt's, out of harm's way."

This wholesome determination was further strengthened by a few remarks made to her, in the course of the afternoon, by the serious gentleman next door, who further promised to call upon the benighted inhabitants of the summer-house; and the two boys were sent off to their mother's aunt, who lived upon her property at Hampstead.

These little domestic discords, however, scarcely reached the peaceful seclusion of the training bower, where Mr. Sloggers's power over the mind and body of his patron increased rapidly day by day. Igno-

rant as Mr. Sloggers was, according to the received standard of education, he knew more of human nature than is taught in schools, and he so managed, by wonderful stories of celebrities in the prize-ring, the pedestrian ground, and the general sporting world, as to create in his patron's rather feeble and unoccupied mind a strong desire to know more of physical education and of physical exploits than was contained in a mere six-weeks' training. Mr. Wheezy's imagination was especially excited by the history of the renowned Captain Barclay, the first man who had raised training to the dignity of a regular science, and who had performed the remarkable feat of walking a thousand successive miles in a thousand successive hours.

"Did he really do it?" asked Mr. Wheezy.

"There's no mistake about that," replied the Eel, rather resenting the doubt.

"Have many other people attempted the task?" inquired Mr. Wheezy.

"Many?" exclaimed the Eel, with a smile of derision: "'underds, sir! hactually 'underds! But, Gawd bless yer, a man as can go an' do that right haff, don't turn hup once in a 'underd year."

"What are the peculiar qualities required to perform this feat?" again inquired Mr. Wheezy, evidently reflecting much upon the undertaking.

"Staminer," said the Eel, decisively; "that's what's wanted. Hactivity's all werry well, but hactivity ain't hevery thin'."

"I quite understand that," returned Mr.

Wheezy ; murmuring afterwards to himself, "a thousand hours ;—ah—yes—exactly—about forty-two days and nights."

"Now," said the Eel, very confidentially, "I'll tell you a werry kewrious hidea as cum across me yesterday mornin'. I ses to myself, as I see you a-peltin' across that paddick in the 'eat o' the day, That's the gen'elman to do Captain Barclay's feat, if hever I set my heyes on 'im."

"Nonsense, Sloggers !" said Mr. Wheezy, evidently gratified by the compliment.

"There's no mistake about it," returned the Eel : "if I don't know my bus'ness, I didn't ought to be 'ere."

"I think I'm firm and muscular, Sloggers," said Mr. Wheezy, rather proudly, drawing his hands towards his shoulders, and giving himself repeated blows upon the chest.

"Now, look 'ere," said the Eel. "I 'ad Flying Jemmy under me for six weeks, afore he ran his twenty mile agen a 'oss ; I knows ev'ry man as ever fought, or ran, or walked for the last twenty year, an' not one on 'em can come hup to you in downright staminer."

Mr. Wheezy glowed with delight at this speech, and his ambition was now thoroughly awakened.

"Staminer," continued the Eel, with characteristic repetition, "is what you've got ; hactivity is what you ain't. I could run a mile quicker nor you could ; but blowed if I could keep hup a peltin' four-an'-a-'arf mile a-hour as you can, all day and all night."

Mr. Wheezy said little more at that time ; but the athletic tarantula had bitten him in his weakest part—his small ambition—and the virus was doing its work.

Mr. Sloggers was not a clumsy advocate, who spoiled his cause by insisting upon it at all hours and all seasons ; he knew the benefit of patience—watchful patience—and the effect of a judicious silence ; and a few weeks more proved the soundness of his judgment.

“Sloggers,” said Mr. Wheezy, one morning, near the close of the period allowed for the training process, “what weight am I now ?”

“Nigher thirteen than fourteen stun,” replied the Eel.

“Let me touch thirteen stone,” returned Mr. Wheezy, “and I’ll attempt Captain Barclay’s feat at once.”

The thing was done ; and just as Mrs. Wheezy was congratulating herself upon the close of the summer-house campaign, and pitying the appearance of her husband, who had, as she phrased it, “fallen so dreadfully away,” she saw indications, not to be mistaken, that Mr. Wheezy’s domestic exile was not yet at an end.

Mr. Wheezy’s tremendous effort began at six o’clock on the morning of the twentieth of November, eighteen hundred and forty-nine. His ground was round the paddock—exactly one mile ; his refuge was still his own summer-house ; and his attendant was still Mr. Alick Sloggers, otherwise the Eel. Mr.

Wheezy looked healthy in the face, though short and puffy in the body, notwithstanding the beneficial result of a long and judicious training. There are some radical physical defects which no human art can ever thoroughly overcome; and Mr. Wheezy's figure was one of these.

The following paragraph appeared in the leading sporting paper:—

“ONE THOUSAND MILES IN ONE THOUSAND HOURS.—This extraordinary feat has just been commenced by a gentleman novice, upon his own ground, in the Buckram Road, Clapham. Bets are being made with some confidence upon the spirited amateur, as it is said he is acting under the experienced advice of that knowing hand, the veteran Sloggers.”

The following paragraph appeared in a paper of decidedly anti-sporting and strict Clapham principles:

“A WRETCHED MANIAC—for in charity we can call him nothing else—has just thrown the highly respectable neighbourhood of Clapham into a state of unhappy excitement, by a series of violent walking exercises in the front of Mr. Hosannah's chapel. If the strong arm of secular authority is not sufficient to stop this melancholy exhibition, will no one come forward, and endeavour to awaken the misguided man to a sense of the wicked perversity of his empty and vain-glorious enterprise?”

The immediate result of the first of these paragraphs was to bring a mass of visitors to Buckram Road, which Clapham had never seen before, and

never hoped to see again. Half the Hansom cabs in London seemed engaged to drive to and from Mr. Wheezy's paddock, carrying strange gentlemen, who looked like ostlers, dressed in stable garments of the finest broadcloth. Dog-carts, with sleek, fiery horses, came up at all hours of the day and night; some loaded with passengers before and behind, and others with only one yellow-gloved, satin-scarfed, large breast-pinned individual sitting in front, attended by an active groom in very splendid livery. Besides these distinguished patrons of the sporting world, a motley crowd assembled round the paddock. Never before had so many thick-set young men with tight-fitting caps, corduroy jackets, and pearl buttons made the acquaintance of a Clapham public. The two classes stared at each other as if they were inhabitants of two opposite worlds; and if Clapham did not understand and appreciate St. Giles's and Whitechapel, St. Giles's and Whitechapel certainly did not suffer under an unreturned love for Clapham. Women were there, in short dresses, thick boots, dirty shawls, ragged bonnets, and uncombed hair. Long costermongers' barrows were there, loaded with a heap of fruit at one end and a heap of copper money at the other. Respectable boys were there, in the intervals of school; some unknown to their parents, others in direct opposition to the express commands of their schoolmasters. Gentlemen's servants, drivers of prim broughams, and waiters at prim tables, managed to attend the walking-ground for a few hours every day, when they were going on

errands, or supposed to be working in their employers' gardens. The policeman on duty in the neighbourhood constantly lingered round the paddock, under pretence of keeping the crowd in order. Strange omnibuses came to the scene of action, loaded inside and out ; and the regular vehicles found a flood of irregular traffic. A quiet public-house in the vicinity lost all sense of propriety under the excitement of the occasion, welcomed the ocean of ready money that poured into its till, and raised a flaunting flag upon the summit of its licensed premises. Street jugglers, tumblers, and Punch-and-Judy men, found their way to a scene of attraction that had been an unfruitful desert to them for many years. In the intervals of Mr. Wheezy's appearance upon the pedestrian arena the audience amused themselves with conversation, betting, little amicable sparring matches, drinking, comic songs, and occasional dog-fights. When Mr. Wheezy issued from his garden-gate to walk his two miles, from a quarter before to a quarter past every alternate hour, he was received with encouraging shouts of applause. The extreme publicity of his position seemed to be rather agreeable to him than otherwise ; and he walked round with a somewhat jaunty air, swinging a thick stumpy stick carelessly in his hand, and lifting one short, fat leg actively after the other, as if he felt in possession of an inexhaustible fund of muscular agility. When he returned to his athletic bower he was put to bed by the Eel, who locked the door of the summer-house, and kept strict watch over his

pedestrian charge. Sometimes Mr. Sloggers would trot the two miles by the side of Mr. Wheezy, for the sake of exercise, and to keep his legs in practice ; at other times he would stand at the door of the garden, to answer questions respecting the condition of his patient, which regulated the course of the betting.

Hour after hour—all day and all night—this kind of life went on in and around the paddock. Although the bulk of the visitors was continually changing, some remained till such a late hour of the night, and others came at such an early hour of the morning, that the watch was scarcely ever broken. The regular hours of the neighbourhood were utterly destroyed ; and every householder went to bed and arose with a heavy sense upon his mind of a riotous impropriety which was undermining the happiness and respectability of the once peaceful Clapham. The only one, however, who exhibited any personal show of opposition upon the ground was the serious gentleman—the next-door neighbour—who made his promised call at the summer-house, attended by Mrs. Wheezy, with a view of awakening its inhabitants to a sense of their folly. They were received at the door by Mr. Alick Sloggers.

“Now, then,” said the Eel, very gruffly, “what’s the row?”

“Is Mr. Wheezy within?” inquired the serious gentleman, in a conciliatory tone.

“Hin!” replied the Eel ; “acorse he is. You’d be hin, if you’d bin walkin’ all night !”

“My friend,” said the serious gentleman, in his most serious manner, “have you fully considered—has Mr. Wheezy fully considered—the end of all this labour and energy? Why ——”

“Now,” said the Eel, interrupting the speaker, “I don’t want to say nothin’ disrespec’ful, but I’m here to see as the gent ain’t worrited. He’s got ’is work cut hout for the next five or six weeks ——”

“Five or six weeks!” almost shouted Mrs. Wheezy, learning for the first time the full extent of her husband’s voluntary exile. “What over Christmas Day?”

“Yes, mum,” said the Eel, “hover that; an’ he can’t be hinterrupted by any one—not heven his own father.”

Mrs. Wheezy and the serious gentleman went away; the first to go at once to her aunt at Hampstead, for advice under these trying circumstances; the second, to consult with Mr. Hosannah at the chapel. Mr. Hosannah’s course was quite clear; he fulminated against body-worship from the pulpit, and had the satisfaction of gratifying a large body of hearers, who were all previously of his way of thinking. Outside the walls, however, amongst that mass of rude material for missionary enterprise assembled round the paddock, his words did not penetrate, and the serious gentleman’s attempt at field-preaching was confessed to be a miserable failure.

Every two hours the determined Mr. Wheezy staggered through his two miles, getting more

bloated, more sleepy, and more fishy-eyed each time. The faithful, constant Sloggers was ever at his side; and his audience were always standing round the enclosure to cheer him through his task.

Mrs. Wheezy's interview with her aunt—a woman of experience and decision of character—resulted in the bringing down of that lady to Saccharine Lodge. The moment she arrived she went to the summer-house, out of her cab, with a stout umbrella in her hand; and although the vigilant Sloggers was at his post, ready to resist her intention, it would have taken fifty Sloggerses to have kept her away from her nephew.

“Now, mum!” said the Eel, trying the same tone and manner which had been successful with the serious gentleman and Mrs. Wheezy.

“Don't mum me,” said the decisive aunt, poking him on one side with her umbrella. “Where's my deluded nephew?”

She was in the sacred summer-house, having locked the door securely behind her, before the astonished Eel could recover himself, and was stirring up the drowsy and exhausted Mr. Wheezy in his tank of welcome flannel.

“All right,” he murmured, half asleep, supposing it was the Eel arousing him for one of his walking-rounds, which was within a minute of being due;—“all right—Slog—half—minute—I—can—do ——”

“No, Mr. Wheezy,” said the decisive aunt, “it's not all right, while you're cutting yourself off,

like a transported felon, from your wife and children, and bringing yourself to the brink of the grave !”

The Eel began to shake the door at this juncture, for the time was up.

“All right—Slogs,” said Mr. Wheezy, opening his eyes a little more, but not yet recognizing his aunt. “I’m good—again.”

The Eel’s knocking at the door became more violent, and Mr. Wheezy sat upright rubbing his eyes.

“Oh yes,” said the decisive aunt, to Mr. Sloggers outside, “knock away. A pretty spectacle you are !” she continued, turning to her rapidly awakening nephew ; “a nice member of society ! a nice father of a family ! Oh, if your poor mother was only alive to see you !”

“Hullo, aunt !” said Mr. Wheezy, looking round, and now as much awake as he had been for the last two days, “where’s Sloggers ?”

The knocking of the Eel now became still more violent, and his voice was heard, shouting :

“If this ’ere door ain’t hopen in a hinstant, I’ll smash the whole bilin’.”

This remark had the double effect of bringing Mr. Wheezy to a tolerable sense of his position, and of arousing that fierce spirit in the aunt which had obtained for her a family notoriety as long as the half-prostrate pedestrian could remember her.

“If you don’t go away this instant from that door,” almost shrieked the decisive woman, “I’ll throw this kettle of boiling water over you.”

There was the kettle of water steaming on the

hob of the temporary stove, as Mr. Alick Sloggers very well knew ; and the threat stopped his knocking, though not his voice.

“Go it,” he said, “go it ; time’s more than hup ; cross the match ; I don’t care.”

Mr. Wheezy made a show of rising at these remarks ; but it was only a show, for in his secret heart his small ambition to distinguish himself in the pedestrian sporting world had completely died away under the rapidly accumulating fatigue, and he was not sorry for some excuse to put an end to the undertaking.

“Sloggers,” he said, “bear witness ; I’m perfectly ready, but I’m coerced.”

“You ought to be ashamed, Mr. Wheezy, to say so,” exclaimed the decisive aunt. “A nice thing for your poor wife’s relations to come up from the country to spend their Christmas, and to find you living in your own summer-house with an adopted burglar or prize-fighter—it does not matter much which—and trotting round a paddock at all hours of the day and night, like a discontented pony !”

The Dutch clock in the summer-house struck at this moment : an hour had passed without the required mile being walked, and the thread of the great match was lost for ever. Mr. Wheezy affected to be sulky as he left the summer-house, and entered his dwelling for the first time for many weeks, in the company of his decisive aunt. Mr. Alick Sloggers, otherwise the Eel, had disappeared, probably to avoid facing an indignant populace ; more

probably to avoid the decisive aunt; but most probably because he had got all he expected to get from Mr. Wheezy, and was secretly as glad as his employer that the athletic masquerade was at an end.

There was much excitement in the crowd round the house, and in the neighbourhood, when it became known that Mr. Wheezy had broken down, and it was some days before the paddock, the roads, and the public-houses, were thoroughly cleared of expectant idlers, and the neighbourhood once more resumed externally its silent and respectable character. The quiet of the interiors was not quite so speedily restored; and to escape the consequences of the scandal he had occasioned, Mr. Wheezy was induced by the decisive aunt to remove at once with his family to a villa at a distance from the scene of his exploits, where harmless and steady occupation, according to the latest accounts, has been found him in the shape of a collectorship of taxes. His weight does not exceed fifteen stone; and as he walks in his official capacity over a rather wide and not over-populated range of country, he may occasionally feel himself capable of going nobly through his tremendous effort; but he has never yet had the folly or the courage to make another attempt.*

* This paper was first published in the *National Magazine*.

CROOKED WAYS.

BOOKED BY K.R.

CONVICT CAPITALISTS.

MR. SMILES'S *Self-Help* is a volume that has been extensively sold and adopted as an educational textbook by certain American colleges. Its success has been well deserved. The world can never hear too much in praise of application and perseverance, energy and courage, industry and ingenuity, self-culture and the dignity of work. As the taste of a nation is purified by looking upon the best models of art, so the character of a nation must be strengthened by looking upon the best models of living men.

The task which Mr. Smiles has performed for virtue, ought certainly to be performed for vice. The rising generation gains nothing by being admitted to view human nature only on its brightest side. Without going the length of saying that whatever is, is right, I assert that whatever has been, is worthy of a record.

Criminals, of nearly all kinds, are great practical demonstrators. The burglar shows us, by experiment, the weakest point in our dwelling; the fraudulent bankrupt has a use in pointing out the traps and pitfalls of trade; the forging bank-clerk directs the attention of men to the blindness of business professors, and the inutility of so-called business checks. It is not enough, for the purposes of per-

fect education, that the career of such great teachers should only be stamped upon the ephemeral pages of the daily and weekly press; the modern Plutarch should seize them, as they rise to the surface, and hand them down for imperishable infamy and fame. The compilations of this character that have been already attempted, are too wanting in simplicity, too overloaded with technical details, to stand as the model histories of "men who have helped themselves." We want something more concise, more biographical, and less apologetic—a Newgate Calendar, in fact, for the use of schools. If, in addition to teaching wisdom and caution to ignorant holders of property, it should teach crime to a few budding criminals, it would work out a beneficial mission, notwithstanding.

It seems to be a law of social nature that crimes shall reach a certain point of enormity, or excellence, before they are put down by the aroused energies of their victims, or retire upon the laurels of satisfied ambition. There was a time when burglary, both with and without violence, was the nightly phantom that haunted the pillows of all who had anything to lose. It reached its climax in certain murders committed some twenty years ago, since which period it has gradually declined, until it may now be considered almost a lost art.

The leading delinquency of the present day, is the robbery of joint-stock companies by confidential servants. From Walter Watts to William George Pullinger, it shows every sign of a vigorous and

progressive youth. It may have been cast a little in the shade by the frauds of certain merchants, private bankers, and bank directors; by such leviathan "self-helpers" as Strahan and Paul, as Davidson and Gordon, as J. Windle Cole, John Sadleir, Hugh Cameron, and Humphrey Brown, of the Royal British Bank; as Colonel Waugh, and certain directors of the Liverpool Borough Bank, the Western Bank of Scotland, and the Northumberland and Durham District Bank (amongst whom there are upwards of two millions of sterling money to be accounted for); it may have been cast a little in the shade by such colossal monuments of fraud, but, for all that, it is well able to hold its own. The relations of master and servant impose many difficulties in the way of ambitious forgers. Such men as Walter Watts, as William James Robson, as Leopold Redpath, and William George Pullinger, are the purest examples of "men who have helped themselves." They started from very humble positions—were born with no directorial silver spoons in their mouths—were quick to discover the weakest point of the trading system in which they were placed—and, with one exception, almost ended by becoming convict millionaires.

Walter Watts, who stands first in the history of this class of modern fraud, was a humble check-clerk in the office of the Globe Insurance Company, at a salary of two hundred pounds a year. He was the son of a former honourable but subordinate clerk in the same establishment, and he entered upon his

duties some time about 1844. When his frauds were discovered in 1850, he had succeeded in abstracting about seventy thousand pounds.

He seems early to have discovered who were in reality the City "men of straw." They were not the "stags" of Capel Court, the professional bill-acceptors, or the presentable directors who gained a precarious livelihood by lending their titled names to boards of management and prospectuses; but those singularly deceptive beings, those wooden guardians of property—these Gogs and Magogs of trading guilds and associations—the appointed auditors. He seems early to have analyzed one of these highly curious productions of the mercantile world, and to have arrived at an exact estimate of its value. He found it to be composed of a little fussiness, a great deal of carelessness and trusting simplicity, a small portion of hurried and divided attention—the real business and chief interest lying in another direction—the usual amount of cloth and linen that goes to the furnishing of a responsible-looking City merchant, and a pair of pinch-nose spectacles of faultless magnifying power. He observed that this half-human, half-mechanical being had a settled aversion to move off its chair, and seldom asked to be allowed to examine any books or documents that were not voluntarily placed before it. He observed that it had an almost superstitious reverence for figures, if they appeared to balance each other, and showed no marks of erasure; and that so long as these emblems or signs of things were provided in

liberal quantities, it never cared to inquire whether the things themselves had any substantial existence. He found that the more entangled these figures, emblems, or signs, were made, the quicker did the auditor glide through his duty; and he inferred from this that human nature was asserting its influence, and that auditors, like other beings, unwilling to confess their ignorance, were only too happy to pass rapidly over complications that they could not understand. He observed that in those rare cases where a personal survey of property was added to an empty audit of figures, the property was never "over the way," or "round the corner," but situated in a distant part of the country, where it gave an excuse for a pleasant summer journey, and several days' festivity at leading hotels: of course at the expense of the audited company.

This being the result of Walter Watts's analysis of auditors, it can hardly be wondered at, that he gained courage to "help himself." He took thousands after thousands, through the medium of false entries and fictitious claims; he became the proprietor of two theatres, and lived an intensely gay life during the hours that remained to him before ten o'clock in the morning, and after four o'clock in the afternoon; his office banking pass-book and his fire and life loss-book presented a mass of erasures and alterations, but still he met with no check or hindrance from the auditing men of straw. Nor was it through their periodical vigil-

ance that his frauds were, at last, discovered, and that he was driven, through a verdict of ten years' transportation, to hang himself in his cell.

The fate of Walter Watts, in 1850, was powerless, so it seems, to deter others from following in his footsteps, and benefiting by the discoveries which his keenness and industry had made. The loss of seventy thousand pounds sterling by the Globe Insurance Company was also powerless, so it seems, to improve the character of auditors, and elevate them into something less practically worthless than men of straw.

The next fraudulent servant who "helped himself" to any great extent, was William James Robson, the forger of Crystal Palace shares. His operations began in 1853—within three years of the death of Walter Watts—and ended in 1856. His private life was very similar to that of the master he copied, although he only succeeded in appropriating about thirty thousand pounds. This was done by taking advantage of his position in the transfer-office of the Crystal Palace Company, to create shares and sell them in the market, relying upon the apathy of the purchasers—a class from whom auditors are drawn. His calculations—or rather Walter Watts's calculations—were perfectly sound, and for two years and more these strips of paper were frequently bought and sold, without any purchaser having the prudence to walk from the Stock Exchange to the transfer-office on the City side of London Bridge, where he might easily have dis-

covered the fraud. The amount that Robson secured was small compared with Watts's abstractions, but it was large when allowance is made for the inferior materials with which he had to work. If his lot had fallen upon happier ground—upon the banking balances of rich and thriving corporations—he might have eclipsed his predecessor in the loftiness and daring of his flight. As it was, he might have said, in imitation of Jean Paul Richter, “I have made the most of the stuff that was given me: no man can do more.” He was transported for twenty years.

Some time before William James Robson rose and fell, and very shortly after the death of Walter Watts, a greater man than either in this peculiar aristocracy of fraud, must have been already laying his plans. Leopold Redpath, a clerk in the share-office of the Great Northern Railway, had also learnt the empty character of auditors and the hollowness of so-called business checks. In 1851 or 1852 he must have begun to issue forged shares. From that period until 1856, his career was one of clerkly exactitude and fraudulent success; his life was one of mingled luxury and philanthropy; and when he was arrested, to be afterwards transported for life, he had obtained from the sale of his forged shares, about two hundred and forty thousand pounds. His trial took place on the 15th of January, 1857, hardly five months after the following auditorial certificate of the company's business regularity, had been issued to the confiding shareholders:—

“Accountant’s Department, Aug. 7, 1856.

‘To THE CHAIRMAN AND DIRECTORS OF THE GREAT
NORTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY.

“Gentlemen,—The accounts and books in every department continue to be so satisfactorily kept, that we have simply to express our entire approval of them, and to present them to you for the information of the shareholders, with our usual certificate of correctness.

“We have the honour, etc.,

(Signed)

“JOHN CHAPMAN, }
“J. CATTLEY, } Auditors.”

At this period, Leopold Redpath must have received the bulk of his enormous prize.

The notoriety of this case, the extent of fraud it disclosed, and the complete verification it presented of Walter Watts’s secret analysis of auditors, were generally considered sufficient to check all further development of this class of crime. The world was disposed to look upon Leopold Redpath as one who had reached the top of the criminal tree; as the most eminent among all modern men of this kind who had “helped themselves.” It was widely understood that all joint-stock enterprises had undergone a searching examination and cleaning out; that insurance offices, railways, and especially banks, were secured, for ever, from any fraudulent worms in the bud, and were now to be happy in having auditors who were something more than men of straw. Failures might come (as come they did), and the country might pass through the financial agony of a commercial crisis (as it did at the close of 1857), but it was felt that forging servants of joint-stock companies had had their day, and that,

after all, the wisdom taught us by their dishonesty was not so dearly bought.

How little this sense of security was based upon actual knowledge, was soon shown by William George Pullinger, the last* and greatest follower of Walter Watts. This late chief cashier of the Union Bank of London pleaded guilty to a charge of having stolen two hundred and sixty-three thousand and seventy pounds, eight shillings and tenpence, by means of a false pass-book, and tampering with a Bank of England account. He entered the bank, as an ordinary clerk, in 1839, and he became chief cashier about 1855. Five years after Walter Watts committed suicide, one year before Robson was discovered and transported, two years before a similar punishment was awarded to Redpath, this fraudulent bank-servant must have begun to abstract the bank funds. On the very day when the trial of the latter criminal was taking place, and possibly on the day after, when his own auditors may have been rubbing their hands and congratulating themselves upon the anti-fraudulent armour of the Union Bank, this William George Pullinger may have been speculating on the turf, or the Stock Exchange, and keeping money back from his employers' store at the Bank of England, in order to gamble like a capitalist, or a sporting lord. As evening came, and he locked his desk, and put

* Since this was written the Commercial Bank of London has been destroyed by a ledger-clerk named Durdan, who has defrauded it of nearly £70,000. February, 1861.

on his hat, and closed the door of the banking-house upon his humbler fellow-clerks, he must have laughed when he considered how they were settling down for hours under the shaded lamps, to trace an obstinate error of a few pounds or a few shillings in the "general balance," while he was tripping off with a quarter of a million of money that was supposed to be safely lodged in the national bullion temple over the way. He had little fear that any discovery would be made before the allotted termination of five years ; for Walter Watts's calculations—proved as they had been by Robson and Redpath—were to be trusted like the axioms of an exact science. He knew that certain inferior stealers of gold had substituted shot in its place ; and that other ruder criminals had piled up stones and brickbats to conceal the loss of property. He had studied in a higher school, and he knew the value of figures. He relied upon a judicious combination of Arabic numerals, and his confidence was not misplaced. The appointed auditors—the Gog and Magog of the bank—were rather an assistance to him than otherwise. They looked so like a pair of terrible guardians of property, that people most contentedly accepted the show for the reality. So William George Pullinger stood for years within their shadow, and "helped himself" freely to everything around him ; and when he was discovered—as usual, not by auditorial sagacity—he had distanced Walter Watts by nearly two hundred thousand pounds, and the great Redpath by nearly thirty thousand.

Many believe (so most of us hear said) that the Pullinger frauds will end this forging series. We shall see. Commercial houses will be hurriedly put in order for a few weeks, and auditors will join hands and swear solemnly that such things shall never occur again. We shall see.

A joint-stock bank, as most persons are aware, is a trading corporation started for money-lending and money-borrowing purposes, with a small paid-up, and a large promised capital. This paid-up capital may be a million of money, and a million we will take it to be, for the sake of example. In the course of a few years, if money be plentiful, and the bank be reputed to be prosperous, "customers' balances" remain, and "deposits" flow in, until from six to ten millions of *borrowed capital* is added to the *paid-up capital*. With the whole of this sum the bank is at perfect liberty to trade, reserving a certain portion by way of "balance"—in some cases a fifth, in others an eighth—according to the rules of business experience, and the laws of banking. In the meantime, the shares, which represent the original paid-up capital of one million sterling, are always to be bought in the open market at a certain varying premium. If the future Pullinger can help himself to a certain proportion of the available resources of the bank (about a fifth will generally suffice)—and there is nothing in the past or present system of auditing to prevent him—it will be easily seen that he can buy up all the shares of his em-

ployers, until he stands the sole proprietor of the establishment, secure from any civil or criminal prosecution. The bank will be his, the clerks will be his, the books and documents will be his; and, as many people prefer dealing with a private banker, he may experience but a very slight "run" upon his six or ten millions of "deposits."

VERY SINGULAR THINGS IN THE CITY.

It is a singular thing that all the working engineers and stout-armed "navigators" who planned, and dug-out, and built up the Great Northern Railway, were compelled, before they commenced their labours, to wait for the oath of one man, who happened to be William James Robson, the future forger. The "compulsory powers" of a railway act cannot be put in force, and the "first sod" of a railway cannot be turned, until oath has been made before a magistrate that a certain amount of "capital" has been subscribed. The man who cast up the sums contained in the "deed of subscription," and who certified that the requisite amount was secured, was William James Robson, a lawyer's clerk, who was afterwards in the Crystal Palace share-office in the City of London.

It is a very singular thing that a railway set in motion, so to speak, by such a man, and falling, as early as 1848, into the hands of an ambitious costermonger, named Leopold Redpath, was not robbed to a much greater extent than nearly a quarter of a million sterling. It is a singular thing that a Board of Directors should have engaged this man without knowing that he once hawked fish and poultry about the streets of Folkestone, Kent; that he was succes-

sively a lawyer's clerk, a shipping clerk, and a bankrupt "insurance-broker," paying half-a-crown in the pound. It is a singular thing that these directors should have placed this man in an office where the secretary's signature was kept in the form of a stamp, which stamp was in a wooden book-case, accessible to any clerk, at any hour of the day, for the purpose of signing "stock certificates." It is a singular thing, in an undertaking representing some five millions of capital, that "stock certificates" duly signed, but bought in, under the operation of sales on the Stock Exchange, to be cancelled, were put away uncanceled in an ordinary cupboard, open to every one employed in the "registrar's office." It is a singular thing that when large irregularities on the part of Mr. Registrar Redpath were discovered two years and a-half before his directors had the courage to arrest him for fraud, he was allowed to pay back certain sums of money, by which he stopped inquiry. It is a singular thing that if his career had been cut short at this point, at Midsummer, 1854, and had not been suffered to extend to Christmas, 1856, the shareholders would have saved about seventy thousand pounds in shares and dividends. Instead of this, he was allowed to take a lofty tone about his means and position "as a gentleman," and some of his directors and fellow-labourers were afraid of losing so valuable and important a servant! It is a still more singular thing that if an inquiry had been at once instituted in 1852, when the first warning of "payments in excess of dividends" should

have been noticed and acted upon, the delinquent would have stolen only about seventy thousand pounds, instead of two hundred and forty thousand.

It is a singular thing that the chief auditor chosen for the accounts of this vast and complicated enterprise, should have been a highly respectable merchant, no doubt, but one who had been so unsuccessful in "auditing" his own business transactions, that in the course of eleven years he had been robbed by a clerk of thirty thousand pounds. It is a singular feature in the life of this auditor, that he *never saw Redpath in his life*. Redpath was about the office, to some purpose, for nearly ten years ; but the leading auditor never saw him, to his knowledge, on any occasion.

It is a singular thing that this same auditor was a Director of the Union Bank of London ; and that Mr. Leopold Redpath kept his banking account at this bank. It is not to be presumed that an auditor of a railway, who never saw its chief registrar, and that registrar so remarkable a man, should, in his capacity of a bank director, know much about the nature, amount, and character of the different bank accounts. An auditor who led the way in signing that extraordinary document, wherein it was stated that the "accounts and books in every department" of the Great Northern Railway, were "correct and most satisfactorily kept," about five months before the great forger was brought to justice, could hardly be expected to pry much into bank ledgers, or to gather much information if he did pry. Perhaps he

relied too much upon the "Governor" of the Union Bank, Sir Peter Laurie, and upon this worthy magistrate's world-famous reputation for "putting" everything like an irregularity "down." An account, such as Redpath must have kept at the Union Bank, must have been highly "irregular," and must have shown suspicious "irregularities," for a railway servant, to say nothing of an ex-fish and poultry hawker, and a bankrupt insurance-broker.

It is a singular thing that in this large and flourishing joint-stock bank, with its many branches, was William George Pullinger, the chief of modern forgers. He has been hurried off the scene in a very summary way, and is beyond the reach of cross-examination; but it requires little knowledge of his transactions to opine that *he* was not ignorant of Leopold Redpath's operations. He could not copy the ex-fish and poultry hawker, by manufacturing shares, but he could extract even more gold from his employers' pockets with a simple "pass-book." A "pass-book" costs only a few shillings at any City stationer's, or less than the price of a coarse and vulgar crowbar. The little profit that the Union Bank of London secured by harbouring the banking account of "Leopold Redpath, Esq.," the bankrupt insurance-broker, was more than counterbalanced, in all probability, by the bad example it placed before the bank clerks. It is evident that William George Pullinger was not improved by coming into contact with a banking account like Redpath's; and it is evident that the Union Bank of London was

not improved by the demoralization of William George Pullinger. One of the statements to be submitted to the suffering shareholders, at the next half-yearly meeting in July,* should run thus:—

SPECIAL PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT (No. 1),

Showing gain by a Fraudulent Customer, and loss by a Fraudulent Clerk.

<i>Dr.</i>				<i>Cr.</i>			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To gain on Red-path's Account (Fraudulent Customer), <i>Estimated</i>	300			By loss on Pullinger (Fraudulent Clerk)—			
Balance loss .	292,700			Principal . .	263,000		
				Interest about .	30,000		
	293,000				293,000		
				Loss. Balance down	292,700		

It is a singular thing that the estimated item of thirty thousand pounds for “interest” has not yet appeared in any directorial statement of the amount of Pullinger’s frauds. The capital so fully employed by Pullinger might have been profitably employed by the bank, for it is evident that as they never missed it, when it was stolen, it must have been an idle and unnecessary “balance.” There is an evil sometimes, it would seem, in being excessively prosperous.

It is a very singular thing that shareholders, in the face of such warnings as these, should still cling

* July, 1860.

to an empty, because a low-priced, system of audit. Whenever their affairs are purposely entangled by men like Leopold Redpath, and they have to call in professional accountants, and resort to an "independent investigation," they then learn that real auditing is a necessary part of a business organization, and that it becomes all the more costly the more it has been neglected. The damage done to a large enterprise by half-shareholder, half-honorary, five, ten, fifteen, and twenty-pounds-charging auditors is seldom ever explained, and *never repaired* by five, ten, fifteen, and twenty-thousand-pounds-charging accountants. The frauds of Redpath, if taken at five per cent. upon the amount, will represent an income *for ever* of twelve thousand pounds per annum. The frauds of Pullinger, if treated in the same way, will represent a perpetual annual income of fourteen thousand and five hundred pounds.

The first sum would surely pay for the continuous and only effective audit of many British railways—perhaps of all; and the second sum would probably do the same for all the joint-stock banks. It is a singular thing that shareholders, at present, are blind to this, and are satisfied with a few respectable, fully-occupied, middle-aged gentlemen "auditors," who manage to "run in" to glance at the books and vouchers about twelve times, or less, in the course of the year. It is a singular thing that these shareholders look to future economy and future profit, to cover these heavy and periodical losses by

fraud; forgetting that the future money saved or made is not the money that was lost, and that the same economy and industry might have been practised without the unhealthy spurring on of gigantic forgers and thieves.

On the other hand, it is an equally singular thing that men of position, of means, and reputation, can be found to fill the chairs of amateur auditorship, for dinners, small patronage, and trifling fees. A new piano for Miss "Auditor," a new dress for Mrs. "Auditor," a family trip to Germany, or Italy, a few banquets at town and suburban taverns, may be very agreeable things in their way, if they be not purchased at too great a cost. A few "attendances," a few "signatures" may not appear much to give for such luxuries, if the *responsibility* incurred is carefully forgotten. The capital invested in British railways alone is estimated at *four hundred millions sterling*. It is nearly all "audited" by these daring amateurs.

THE BRITISH MERCHANT IN TROUBLE.

It is distressing to find certain British productions falling into contempt. The British lion must be admitted to be left to us, but there is no saying what even he might prove, if divested of his terrible skin. Has he any bones? Does he possess any blood and muscle? Or is he merely stuffed with mouldy hay?

There is the British wine—our own juice of our own—vegetables; what cup has ever been filled with it in delirious delight? what Anacreon has ever ventured to sing its praise? The Samian wine, a liquor almost as medicinal as the Harrogate waters, has been immortalized in glowing verse; but Britannia's vintage is nowhere on the roll of fame. The most patriotic of our convivial countrymen decline to rally round it; and they drink destruction to the perfidious foreigner in the generous fluid which that foreigner makes and sells.

There is, or rather was, the British Bank, the Royal British Bank. Its very name should have been a guarantee for millions sterling. It ought to have existed for ages, and its solid roots should have struck as deeply into the earth as Stonehenge or the Peak of Teneriffe. What was the fact? It withered in a night; it fell, a crumbling mass of

paper and dust; and those who dug in the ruins found nothing but a few well-thumbed prayer-books, and some worthless mining shares in the Bottomless Pit.

These humiliations of the British name, it seems, are not sufficient, so the British merchant must strive to add another to the list. He has succeeded to a marvel. He has been accused, before now, of systematically defrauding his creditors, but he was preying upon his debtors, all the while, in a two-fold degree. He is double-edged, and cuts in both ways. He has gathered with his right hand and with his left. The traditional cunning of the Hebrew, the reputed mendacity of the Greek, he unites and outdoes. So bold and unscrupulous has he been, and so notorious has he become, that a society has, at last, been founded to improve his morals, and lead him back into the right path. The mission of the ragged-school, combined with the functions of the public prosecutor, have been transferred to certain self-appointed guardians of trade, and the result is the formation of a society called the "Association for Suppressing the Practice of Falsely Labelling Goods for Sale." An influential committee has been appointed, consisting of manufacturers and traders, from the principal manufacturing districts, and the most respectable wholesale houses in London, and certain rules have been adopted to help in converting the British merchant from some of his evil ways. They wish to prevent him from committing open, registered frauds—from selling one hun-

dred yards of thread, for example, and labelling them as two hundred—and yet they find a difficulty in attempting even this. Several commercial associations, upon being applied to for assistance, have declared that the subject “could not be entertained.” Numerous influential traders openly avow their determination to discourage the whole scheme, and hundreds of shippers of goods insist that the false labels shall be continued to suit the wishes of foreign importers. The existing law, it appears, if set in motion, is sufficient to reach the offenders; but the association is very anxious to work only with moral forces. They will endeavour to convert the British merchant by dissuasion and remonstrance, and only in cases of positive necessity will they resort to prosecutions. The mission they have taken upon themselves is so simple, their demands are so moderate, and so little calculated to stir up the muddy depths of trading immorality and selfishness, that their opponents ought to feel how their true interest must lie in at once allowing them to succeed. A little virtue and a little preaching, if taken favourably at the outset, will often prevent the moralist and preacher from administering a stronger dose.

First of all, then, the British merchant is required by this very reasonable and almost timid association, to return to his disconsolate and neglected arithmetical tables; and to throw off, at once, and for ever, those dangerous but profitable heresies with regard to quantities which lead him to label everything with

highly fanciful exaggerated weights and numbers. The British merchant has been found guilty of selling pieces of calico, nominally thirty-six yards in length, never measuring more than thirty yards. He is found guilty of selling thirty-six inches of silk lace, and calling it fifty-four inches; of selling grosses of tapes containing only sixty yards, as if they represented the full quantity of one hundred and forty-four yards. He is found guilty, in selling French cotton braid, of so far tampering with certain numbers that are expected to record the widths of the article, that five is turned into seven, seven into nine, and nine into eleven. He is found guilty, in making up fringes upon cards, of putting a width of two inches where it will meet the eye of the buyer, and a width of one inch all through the bulk that is out of sight. He is found guilty of increasing the weight of the hogshead, compared with the sugar which it contains, from twelve per cent. of the gross weight, to seventeen per cent. He is found guilty of pirating designs, of imitating the wrappers of well-known makers, and of forging popular trade marks. He is found guilty of selling ribbons in long lengths, the first three yards of which (being the part usually unrolled) are of a quality infinitely superior to the bulk of the piece. He is found guilty of reducing the weight of candles (sold in bunches) until the buyer is defrauded of two ounces in his pound. He is found guilty of mixing cotton with silk, and adulterating webbing; of mixing cotton with wool, and adulterating cloth.

In proportion as this adulteration increases, the labels become more prominent in asserting the purity of the articles ; and " All Wool " or " All Silk " are printed in the largest of golden letters, on the purest of cream-coloured cards. He is found guilty of putting false fancy lengths upon costly linens and cambrics, and false fancy quantities upon costly packets of buttons, etc., because these articles are generally made up for sale in such a purposely artistic manner, that it would spoil their appearance to subject them to the measuring test. These frauds are all considered, by those who practise and grow rich on them, as allowable customs of the trade. The British merchants of all grades combine to prey upon the consumer, who is the only sufferer in the end. The poor sempstress, about whom so much wordy philanthropy has been talked by these very gentlemen, is, perhaps, their most melancholy victim. She buys the thread that snaps in her hand, and those delusive reels which contain a very small allowance of cotton to a very large allowance of wood.

For all this, and much more of the same kind, the British merchant is not to be put in a newly created pillory, or confined in a degrading prison. His wealth, his social importance, his external respectability, are to save him from this punishment, and he is only to be gently remonstrated with.

The association for improving his morals will lead him back to the innocent days of his childhood, when he stood up with his hands behind him, and had the

great truths of Cocker or Walkinghame instilled into his unsophisticated mind. He will be asked to place his hand upon his heart, and say if he has always acted as if sixteen drachms were an ounce; sixteen ounces, one pound; twenty-eight pounds, one quarter; four quarters, one hundredweight; and twenty hundredweight, one ton? He will be questioned as to how far he has observed the immutable canons of wool weight; and whether he has always given seven pounds to the clove; two cloves to the stone; two stone to the tod; six and a-half tods to the wey; two weys to the sack, and twelve sacks to the last? He will be catechized upon his observance of the strict rules of dry measure; wine measure; and ale and beer measure. He will be closely examined upon his adherence to the cloth and yarn measures; and it is here expected that the stubborn sinner will melt, and admit that he has always remembered the quantities obliquely, giving only two and a-quarter inches (instead of nine) to the quarter; four nails (instead of sixteen) to the yard; one hundred and twenty threads (instead of two hundred and forty) to the bur, and six burs (instead of twenty-four) to the spindle. At this favourable point in his anticipated conversion he will be asked the usual questions explanatory of the arithmetical tables, and his answers are expected to be something like the following:—

Association for Reforming the British Merchant.—For what purpose is Troy weight used?

Repentant British Merchant.—What, indeed?

Association, etc.—For what purpose is Avoirdupois weight used?

Repentant B. M. (*with visible emotion*).—Ah, dear-a-deary me!

Association, etc. (*with emphasis*).—For what purpose do you use the yard, the English ell, and the Flemish ell?

Repentant B. M. (*after a flood of tears*).—For the basest of purposes. Spare me, good gentlemen; I cannot—I cannot, indeed!

Association, etc.—What is the use of long measure?

Repentant B. M. (*excitedly*).—There's no such thing. It's short measure. It's always short. (*Sensation.*)

Association, etc. (*severely*).—What is the use of dry measure?—of any measure?

Repentant B. M. (*hysterically*).—Ha, ha! Very true. What a question! Oh dear!

At this stage the “unfortunate man,” the “wretched creature”—or whatever, in the language of the ragged-schools, the association think proper to term him—is expected to faint (or walk) away, and the examination will be adjourned in confusion and haste.

This practice of falsely labelling goods for sale is not to be handled with kid gloves. No practical man on the committee can believe in the mere force of dissuasion or remonstrance. If the law be declared sufficient to reach offenders, the law assuredly must be put in motion. Supposing that, in one

way or another, the labours of the society are crowned with full success, will they have done more than have cured a superficial sore, while the blood of the system is still left in unwholesome impurity? The seven-yard reel may be raised to seven yards, and many other quantities in weights and measures may be called by their right names, but clever falsehood in business circles will still command its position and rewards, and scrupulous honesty—on the losing side—be left to go to the wall. Colossal palaces of merchandise with a thousand windows, will still tower over the meaner house-tops, will still be nothing more than the busy hives where capital is stored to yield the greatest possible per centage, by men who only attend about twelve times a-year, to be presented with trading results. These palaces of trade—unscrupulous, profitable trade—will still be divided into a hundred departments under a hundred separate managers or partners, whose only interest is to return the largest amount of profit on the capital entrusted to them at the beginning of the year. To buy, by any means, in the cheapest market, and to sell, by any means, in the dearest market, is all they have to do, to secure themselves money, independence, and even respect.

The fraudulent bankrupt, who contemplates a midnight transformation of his stock-in-trade into a certain sum of portable cash, without the annoyance of being asked any troublesome questions, is never at a loss to find a ready midnight

buyer in the person of one of these departmental chiefs. The tottering debtor, who has obtained an extensive credit in one of these departments, has only to hint his difficulties to the energetic manager, to be at once sustained with such glowing "references," that his liabilities will soon be transferred into the account-books of a rival firm. While the second creditor suffers, the first creditor gets paid, and this, in some City circles, is mildly spoken of as "getting out." The banker, who writes upon purity of banking, will gather in bills for discount bearing the most leprous names, providing there is one name, either on the front or the back, that is reputed to be a solvent guarantee. He cares little what rotten, speculative trading may be fostered by the facilities he affords ; he is not in business as the preserver of mercantile morality, and has only to make his profits in the usual average way. He has little more than an affected horror even of forged documents, until they are left unpaid in his cash-box, and then he is loud in his abuse of the edged tools, in playing with which he has cut his hands. He has been taught to conceal so much, from motives of prudence, that he has lost the relish for straightforward truth, and when truth presents itself to him, he regards it only as another imposition of a novel and elaborate kind.

These are only some of the deeper vices of our present commercial system, which the association before mentioned has no ambition to attack. The committee have doubtless formed a modest and

accurate estimate of their own strength. Being drawn from the class whose disreputable members they are trying to reform, they start with no ignorance of the nature of their work. Our good wishes go with them. If they fail—as they possibly may—the disgrace will fall on the British merchant; while, if victorious, they may pave the way for bolder missionaries, who will endeavour yet further to purify the morals of trade.

INEXHAUSTIBLE HATS.

Most persons are familiar with the trick that conjurors perform, in which a truck-load of feathers, a few score of tin-cups, and a clothes-basket full of flowers, are brought from an apparently empty hat. They must recollect how the mysterious fountain seemed never tired of welling up, and how, when it had ceased for a few seconds, it was again set flowing at the request of a lady or a child. The trick is popularly known by the title of the "inexhaustible hat," and has many imitations in the legerdemain of trade.

A "calamitous fire" at some large wholesale City warehouse, especially if it be in the clothing trade, is an inexhaustible hat, from which there is an almost ceaseless flow of "salvage stock." Almost before the damp hose has ceased playing on the smoking sky-roofed building in Wadding Street, or Fustianbury, there is scarcely a retail slapperdasher from Blackwall to Hammersmith, and from Highgate to Norwood, whose shop has not broken out in a dreadful rash of placards, notes of admiration, and damaged goods. As in the antiquarian market you will always find the supply of Oliver Cromwell's skulls to be equal to the demand; as in the superstitious market you can get the holy coats, and blood

and teeth of saints in any quantity, sent any distance (on the receipt of a post-office order), carriage free; so in the pushing, cutting, puffing slapper-dashers' market, where we are compelled to go for the adornment of our bodies, there is no limit to the material that has been liberally bought, after it has been providentially saved. Dingy old nightmare patterns, belonging to an age before the existence of schools of design, are dragged, once more, in fearful quantities, before the light of day. Like Othello, they cannot be loved for any beauty of colour or form, and only for the dangers they are supposed to have passed through, while the devouring element was striving to secure them as its prey. The rolls of calico that (according to advertisement) have been damaged by water at a single fire are only equalled by one of those cities that have been suddenly swallowed up by the sea. The miles of gaudy ribbon that (according to advertisement) are unrolled from the mouth of the charred and blackened ruin, are as endless in reality as that other ribbon seems to be which comes from the mouth of the mountebank at a fair.

An important bankruptcy is another inexhaustible hat, as bountiful in its yield of bargains and sacrificial goods as any calamitous City fire. The Anglo-Saxon energy—the keenness and activity that make commercial capital out of these commercial disasters—are still chiefly confined to the clothing trade. A glance at the slapperdashing shops in any thoroughfare or principal by-street

of the metropolis and suburbs will show what a number of enterprising traders have speculated in the bankrupt stock of Messrs. Strawboy and Rag. Though the muslins may be rotten—the colours fast to go, not fast to stay—and the prints of the same barbarous outline and colour as the stock that was foolishly saved from destruction by fire—yet each enterprising slapperdasher has not only bought them all, but, more wonderful still, has got them all, as the ready-money purchasers of London are invited to see and judge for themselves. Our wives and daughters are first clothed in salvage stock, that has been desperately torn from the embraces of the flames; and then they are invited to adorn their lovely persons in garments of miraculous cheapness, that have been bought in a hundred places at once by the sanction of the official assignee. The inexhaustible hat of bankruptcy will overflow with every kind of textile fabric (except those for which the manufacturer is supposed to have been honestly paid) as long as the performance seems agreeable to the public taste.

A sale by auction, where the household gods of the bankrupt are brought to the hammer, is an inexhaustible hat of an equally marvellous and deceptive kind. A few passes of the auctioneer's magic pen, and the old motto is proved to be wrong, for out of nothing comes almost everything. The home of insolvency is transformed into a horn of plenty, and the bankrupt, in the hour of his adversity, finds himself the apparent possessor of a variety of

luxuries, each one of which is sufficient to prove that his private expenditure must have been of the most reckless kind.

The bill that announces the forthcoming *bonâ fide* sale has long been recognized as a work of literary art. It begins with the legal heading of "In re Richard Jones, a bankrupt," though it omits to state that Richard Jones was conducting a small business as a draper in an eight-roomed house (including the shop) at Somers Town. It soon passes from the dry, unimaginative, unelastic phrases of the law, into the rapturous vocabulary of the auction mart. A little way down the bill, we come upon a prominent ridge of type, describing, in glowing terms, a magnificent-toned, full-sized, walnut piano. (The piano used to be of rosewood, but walnut is now your only fashionable wear.) Passing over a valley of small type, which contains a brief mention of breakfast, dinner, and tea services, easy chairs, matting, bedding, kitchen utensils, etc., etc., we come upon another series of large and small ridges devoted to exquisite drawing-room suites in silk and velvet, large-sized brilliant plate chimney-glass in richly-gilt carved wood frame, portfolios of prints containing the choicest specimens of the early masters, Arabian bedsteads, dining-room suite in Spanish mahogany covered in the best morocco leather, marble slab and plate-glass chiffonier, china vases, cut-glass lustres, spring stuffed settees, noble telescope dining-table, papier-mâché occasional chairs, superb ormolu fourteen-day striking clock,

fine oval loo-table, and rich three-thread tapestry Brussels carpets. Other ridges of type are devoted to other similar articles, including oil and water-colour pictures, and a small cellar of well-selected wine ; until Richard Jones, the small bankrupt draper in the eight-roomed house (including the shop) at Somers Town, is transformed into a fraudulent Sardanapalus, feeding upon the property of his creditors.

If the sale were of that extensive public character which auction-mart proprietors always lay claim to in their advertisements, it might, perhaps, be worth the while of Richard Jones, a bankrupt, to protest against such a gross misrepresentation of his private life. As these sales, however, are confined to the small business connection of a particular auctioneer, who has a special reputation for selling furniture, as other auctioneers have a special reputation for selling books, or house property, or works of art ; and as two-thirds of the frequenters of these sales are brokers and professional purchasers (chiefly Jews), who fully understand the tricks of trade legerdemain by which the furniture of an humble eight-roomed house at Somers Town is swelled into the contents of several well-appointed family mansions ; there is no occasion for Richard Jones, a bankrupt, to trouble himself about his damaged reputation, even if he follow his lost household gods to their final place of sale. He will see his well-worn chairs and couches ; his table on which he carved his children's dinner ; his looking-glass in which he shaved

himself before his bankruptcy ; his sofa on which he slept over his weekly paper on a Sunday afternoon ; his pictures of a stage-coach in full swing on a country road, and a kitchen table containing a loaf of bread, a cut cheese, two onions, and a glass of ale, which specimens of art were given him, as a marriage present, by an uncle who was formerly in the public line ; he will see all these things, and many others, that have cast off the familiar household faces they once wore, and have put on such a dusty, tied up, packed, and lotted look, that he will almost pass them by as utter strangers amidst the crowd of console tables, toilet services, Circassian cloth curtains, winged wardrobes, and marble wash-stands that bewilder him on every side. He will have no recollection of ever being the possessor of a sweet-toned harmonium, containing ten stops—clarionet, flute, sourdine, bourdon, cor Anglais, grand jeu, expression, tremulo, and two fortes ; and yet he will find this complicated instrument figuring in the catalogue under the cover of his bankrupt name. He will see the eager and careful Israelite, who knows a good deal of guile, going over the articles, one by one, with the catalogue, the day before the sale ; punching beds that are not his beds, jumping upon sofas (to try the springs) that are not his sofas, turning up loo-tables (to examine the hinges) that are not his tables, looking at the backs and fronts of pictures that are not his pictures, and pinching all kinds of solid articles (as if they were made of India-rubber) that never had a

place in his domestic castle, although his commercial calamity has, in some way, forced them to a premature and *bonâ fide* sale.

When the hour arrives for the rostrum to be mounted, he will find himself alluded to as a person of considerable taste and judgment in furnishing a house, although unfortunate in conducting the ordinary operations of trade. He will find that the two-thirds of professional purchasers, including the eager and careful Israelite who know a good deal of guile, are not in the habit of paying the slightest attention to the preliminary remarks of the auctioneer, and only awake to a sense of business when the bidding for the first lot has actively commenced. He will find himself amongst an outer crust of private, inexperienced bidders—bargain-hunters, furnishing house-keepers, lodging-letters, and persons about to marry. He will find that when this outer crust of auction visitors is not tempted to make any offers for the particular lot which the auctioneer is dwelling upon, the inner circle of professional purchasers—a banded society of brokers and brokers' men—obtain, in most cases, an easy bargain as their prey. When, however, the outer crust of amateur bidders is moved to enter into competition with the regular professional hands, there is a murmur of savage opposition heard running through the Israelites in front, and a combination of brokers and purchasers upon commission prevents the outsiders getting the coveted article below the regular high broker price. When the sale has reached the half-way house—

the small cellar of well-selected wine—and tasting samples, with bread-and-cheese, are being handed round for the refreshment of the visitors, the bankrupt will have found that, to purchase back even his own household gods in the cheapest way, he must place himself in the hands of a buyer upon commission, a broker, or a broker's agent, generally one of the Israelites, who know a good deal of guile. Trade-conjuring has brought things out of his house that were never in it; and only trade-conjuring can replace those things that were once really there.

PIANOFORTE LESSONS.

OF all the false household gods, that are not gods, but demons—of all the hideous skeletons that mope and mow in corners of peaceful dwellings, there is nothing more detestable than a thoroughly bad and new piano. An instrument whose keys are heavy and clogged, and refuse to move under any but the most muscular grasp; whose wires are dumb for any harmonious utterances, and find speech only for a loose, short tinkling sound, that is thoughtful enough to die away as soon as produced; but whose outer shell, if not in accordance with the severest decorative taste, is highly polished and showy to the eye, is nothing but a musical, melancholy, delusive apple of the Dead Sea. The mechanism of such an instrument is worn and faded with age, while its case is so new that the damp of nature has hardly left the wood. Many thousands of such pianos are annually made in this country, and disposed of through an elaborate organization with tolerable success. They are always well advertised as bargains sold under peculiar circumstances, and purchasers are always ready to be caught by such a taking device. I have not always been so worldly-wise myself. It was only the other day that I bought an instrument in this way, which has since,

I am happy to state, been turned into profitable use as a mustard-and-cress bed. The record of my experience may be a warning to those who have the same money and the same desire to buy a piano, and who are, at present, as innocent as I once was, but never hope to be again.

The first piano that I visited was described in the advertising columns of the leading daily journal as "a sweet and elegant instrument, chaste in design, pliable in touch, with all the latest improvements; the property of a lady who was going to Sierra Leone." The address was a lodging-house in a genteel decayed neighbourhood; and I was struck by the contrast between the brilliant face of the instrument, and the faded appearance of the well-worn furniture in the room.

"You haven't had it long, ma'am?" I said, addressing the lady who was about to proceed to Sierra Leone.

"No, sir," she replied, "and there's the annoyance. If I'd known my medical man was going to order me to Sirry Leony for the benefit of my health, I shouldn't have bought it, as I did, only two months ago."

"That's rather a curious place to be ordered to for your health, ma'am," I said; "the most fatal spot for Europeans on the globe."

"I leave it to my doctor," she replied, promptly, "who knows my constitution best. Shall I have the pleasure of sending the piano home at fifty pounds?"

"Thank you," I replied, "I have got my daughter to consult, but I will lose no time in letting you know."

"There are two other persons after it," she returned, as she showed me to the door; "and if you could oblige me during the day?"

"Oh, certainly," I said, "you may consider it done."

I did not decide to purchase this "chaste and pliable instrument;" and I believe its nominal owner did not go to Sierra Leone, as I saw the same advertisement repeated, at intervals, for several months after this interview.

The next piano that I visited was one described in very similar terms, except that it was the property of a bereaved parent. Children will die, and pianos must be sold, and as public inspection was invited, I got over any natural delicacy that I might have felt in trespassing, as a stranger, upon the sacred domains of private grief.

The address was again a lodging-house in the same neighbourhood, with very similar furniture, and a very similar instrument—so similar, in fact, that it might have been the identical one I had gazed upon a few weeks before. A female servant attended me during the inspection.

"Missus," said the girl, handing me a written paper, "'as put down the lowest she'll take, an' if you don't like that amount, p'raps, she ses, you'll make a offer."

"Isn't your mistress at home, then?" I asked.

“Oh, yes,” replied the girl; “but she never comes into this room, and never will until that pianny’s moved out of it.”

“Indeed!” I observed.

“No, sir,” continued the girl, “becos you see it belonged to Miss Mariar, who was the fav’rite child.”

“It looks very new,” I answered, “as if the child hadn’t used it much.”

“Lor’ bless you, sir!” returned the girl, “Miss Mariar thought nothink of ’aving a new pianny ev’ry week, an’ the men was always a-muckin’ the stairs in bringing ’em in, or takin’ ’em out.”

“Is Miss Maria, as you call her, the child that’s dead?” I asked.

“Yes, sir,” she answered, “I think she is.”

I at once took my leave, without any further remarks, and, as the door closed behind me, I fancied I heard a somewhat angry conversation between the girl and some other female voice (perhaps the invisible mistress’s) in the passage.

Unfavourable as were my impressions of the two last visits, I resolved to persevere in my search; and the next advertisement that attracted me was one in which an aged man, whose sands of life had nearly run out, announced his wish to provide a new home for his piano before his death.

“You’ve kept it in excellent condition,” I remarked to the venerable-looking owner, for it seemed to me as new and as showy as the other two I had taken the trouble to examine.

"I have," he replied, "and I shouldn't like to part with it to any man who wouldn't treat it as well. It's been a companion to me for many years, and I respect it."

"A very proper feeling," I remarked, "and I hesitate in offering to deprive you of such a companion."

"Not at all, sir," he answered quickly—"not at all. With one foot in the grave, it's not proper that I should stand with the other foot in a piano. I've no friends or relations—none whatever—the instrument's yours for fifty pounds."

"I think," I said, "I must take time to consider before I decide."

"Why?" he asked, sharply. "You're a man of business: so am I."

"True," I answered; "but this is a transaction, like marriage, which a man seldom enters into more than once during a life."

"Pay me five-and-forty pounds," he said, "and the loss of the difference will fall upon the charity to which I shall give the money."

"I think I must decline the purchase altogether," I replied.

"You've either been playing upon my feelings, sir," he said, with much energy, "or wasting my time."

"Neither," I replied.

"Perhaps you are looking for a hurdy-gurdy?" he asked, sarcastically.

"Wrong again," I returned; "the fact is, I

have seen this instrument before, at the house of a lady who ought, by this time, to be at Sierra Leone."

A minute but particular mark on one of the keys had enabled me to satisfy myself about this discovery, which turned out to be right. As I took my leave of the pianoforte proprietor, whose sands of life—according to the advertisement—had nearly run out, I noticed a slight change in the position of his wig, to say nothing about his altered tone and manner, which made him more youthful by thirty years.

My experience by this time ought to have satisfied me that little pecuniary benefit was to be derived from hunting for bargains out of the regular order of trade. Curiosity, however, led me on; and the little knowledge I had already gained produced a feeling of confidence in my wisdom and keenness, that gave an additional zest to the pursuit.

The next piano that I visited was the property of a widow lady in reduced circumstances, who was compelled to part with some of the luxuries that had adorned her once happy home. The address was still the same kind of front parlour in a house let out for lodgings, and the piano was still the same kind of gay, showy, got-up-looking instrument, refusing in its shiny coat of sticky, treacly varnish, to harmonize with the other threadbare and dusty trappings of the room. After a few minutes' delay, the lady made her appearance, dressed in an ordinary vulgar dress, and with nothing of the widow

about her except a particularly large and frightful cap, which she had evidently put on in a hurry, to attend me in what she considered becoming costume.

“You’ll excuse me, sir,” she said, with emotion, “if I seem to hurry you, but you know how painful it must be to me to sell anything that belonged to him, when he’s only been dead a month—a month come next Wednesday.”

“Indeed!” I said, with a voice of sympathy. “Is it a six three-quarter octave?”

“No, sir,” she returned, with a deep sigh, “he couldn’t a-bear anything larger than a six-and-a-half. He never had strength to play upon it, though he gave eighty-five guineas for it a month before he died; and I suppose I mustn’t ask any one more than sixty?”

“I thought it seemed very new,” I replied; “unseasoned, if I may use the term.”

“No, sir,” she said, “not unseasoned. New, if you like, but not unseasoned; he was too good a judge for that; and his last words almost were, ‘Mary Anne, if you let that instrument go for less than I gave for it, you’ll do yourself an injury.’”

I went direct from the widow’s house, of course without having made a purchase, to look at the piano of a widower in reduced circumstances, which, my advertisement list told me, was for sale in the next street. The instrument might have been the twin brother of the widow’s piano, and the widower might have been the husband of the widow. The house

was again a lodging-house ; the apartment was again a faded front parlour ; and the bereaved owner of the property was a middle-aged man, who had huddled on a shabby black coat over a blue shirt and a highly-fanciful waistcoat, which gave him the appearance of a professional cricketer, made hurriedly decent to attend a funeral.

“ You’ll pardon me, sir,” he said, in tones of deep feeling, “ if I appear to hasten your departure, but you know how trying it is to dispose of anything that belonged to her, when she’s only been dead a fortnight—a fortnight next Saturday.”

“ Indeed !” I replied, in the same tone I had used to the widow, for the speech was, in substance, the same. “ Is it a full seven octave !”

“ No, sir,” he replied, with a heavy sigh, “ her fancy always ran upon six and three-quarters. It seems only yesterday that I gave eighty guineas for it, before she was taken from us, and now I suppose I musn’t expect to get more than sixty pounds in cash ?”

“ I’m afraid,” I answered, “ that it’s too new—too unseasoned for me to venture on its purchase.”

“ Too new, sir ? too unseasoned ?” he exclaimed, in astonishment ; “ don’t say that, because I know she was too good a judge to be imposed on. It was only a few days before she was taken from us that she said to me, ‘ Robert, it was very kind of you to spend your mother’s legacy in buying me a piano ; but it’ll be no loss to you. You’ll get back all you gave for it, if you put it up to auction.’ ”

Having had enough of this mixture of the grave and the huckster's shop, I passed, still pianoless, to a more cheerful atmosphere. A young man in chambers had advertised an instrument for sale, which he had unexpectedly won at a raffle ; and though his direction was not very promising, I resolved to pay him a visit. The instrument, as I expected, presented the same old familiar face that I had gazed upon so often for the last few weeks, and I seemed to welcome it as a tried and valued friend.

The young man, who looked like one of those commercial travellers who leave Josephus in penny numbers at street-doors upon commission, affected an extremely off-hand, living-in-chambers manner in displaying his property.

"There you are," he said, throwing up the lid ; "a piano's all very well, but it don't suit my book."

"You don't play, then ?" I asked.

"No time," he replied, "for all that sort o' thing when you're going in for the law."

"No," I said, "I suppose not. The instrument seems remarkably new."

"Does it?" he returned. "I'm no judge. They tell me it's worth eighty sovs., and I want fifty for it. That won't break anybody's back."

"No," I said ; "but I don't think it's quite the thing to suit me."

"Say five-and-forty, then. It cost me nothing, and I want to buy a dog-cart."

"I think I must decline," I replied.

"You don't seem to know your own mind," he said.

"I know the piano, though," I returned. "It belonged to one whose sands of life ought by this time to be thoroughly run out."

The young man in chambers said no more, for he saw that I was an exceedingly well-informed man. The instrument was the same one, with the small mark on one of the keys, that I had examined at the house of the venerable-looking secret agent.

I did not give up the investigation even at this point, but passing from these channels of private enterprise to a more public field, I visited a piano that was on view at a hat shop in a leading thoroughfare. It was still one of the same large family of instruments that was presented to my view, though the man who exhibited it was not made up to perform any particular character, except that of an affable tradesman.

"Music's a nice accomplishment, sir?" he said, as I tried the keys with a very lame performance of the "Merry Swiss Boy," and variations.

"Ye—s," I said, endeavouring to speak without interrupting the flow of harmony.

"Wish I had your touch, sir," he continued. "You must have learnt very young."

"No," I said, affecting not to hear his last remarks, "this instrument's not the one for my money."

"Of course not, sir; certainly not, sir," he returned quickly; "I thought so the moment I heard

you run your fingers over the keys. There's no deceiving you, you're too good a judge of the article."

"Good morning," I said, preparing to go, though not displeased by his observations.

"If you'll step up-stairs, sir," he replied, confidentially, "I think I can suit you to a hair, though we don't want it generally known that we sell pianos at a hat-shop."

I went up-stairs under the guidance of a boy, who took me as far as the second landing, where I was introduced to a long room crammed full of every variety of instruments. The master followed in a few minutes, and seemed astonished that I was standing in the middle of his secret stock, instead of in another department, where he meant me to be ushered to inspect another solitary specimen.

"Well, sir," he said with some little embarrassment, "since you've been shown in here by that stupid boy, I can say no more. You're a man of the world, and must know that a hat-warehouse is not half full of pianos without a reason. They may be smuggled, or they may be—— However, we'll say no more about it. Here they are. I hope, sir, you'll take no notice of the singular circumstance."

"Oh, certainly," I replied, "it's nothing to me."

"Thank you, sir," he returned, quickly, "much obliged, I'm sure; and since you are here, if there's any instrument you'd like to select, you may place your hand on any one of them for fifty pounds."

I own that I was weak enough to be deceived by the elaborate train of deception, and that I suffered accordingly. I selected an instrument for a fifty-pound note, which faded away in harmony and appearance before it had been in my possession six months, notwithstanding that it was treated in the most kind and considerate manner. I called in the services of a professional man to effect a cure, and he candidly told me that the operation was impossible. The piano had only one fault, but that was of the most unreformable kind—it was a bargain bought, in a moment of weakness, at a hat-shop.

A LITERARY ADVISER.

I WAS once a not undistinguished member of the Soso Theatre. I flatter myself that I not only had the ability to pay for the parts that I performed, but the ability to perform the parts that I paid for—at least Mr. Elliston Potts, the manager of that nursery of dramatic genius, thought so. “My dear sir,” said he, “your Hamlet the other night forcibly reminded me of the elder Kean. I have made out your little bill for the month, and, in consideration of your unquestionable talent, and your taking a round of characters, I have put them in to you at half our usual price:—

MR. FUDGEPLOT,

Dr. TO ELLISTON POTTS.

	£	s.	d.
4 Tony Lumpkinsat 5s. 6d.	1	2	0
1 Hamlet..... 10s. 0d.	0	10	0
	£1	12	0

“Ah, sir,” he said, as he receipted the bill, “it is a matter of constant regret with the profession, that Shakespeare did not write some good farces. We are bound hand and foot to these Dramatic Authors, whose terms are far from reasonable.

Shakespeare has done a good deal for the stage, but he was guilty of a great oversight there."

It was this conversation with Mr. Potts, coupled with the desire that I felt to distinguish myself in the eyes of my theatrical companions, that induced me to turn my thoughts to dramatic composition. I resolved to write a farce. I began my task. Many days and nights passed, without much progress. I found myself harassed by doubts and beset with difficulties. At one time I thought I had got too many women in the piece: I struck out four, and had consequently to re-arrange the thread of my story. At another time I took objection to several of the male characters. I turned one young man into an old man, and I transformed two old men into young ones. I was fastidious in the choice of names, and some of my characters went through as many appellative changes as a swell-mobsman. I had also great difficulty in fixing the relationship of the several parties. I was much troubled in my mind as to whether I should make an old lady the mother of a son and daughter, or the aunt of a nephew and niece;—I walked from London to Greenwich ruminating this point, and I walked back again, without having decided it. I passed a restless night, and about half-past three in the morning I got up and lit a candle, having determined to make her the mother. The resolution involved the striking out of some expressions that would have sounded highly undutiful from a child to a parent; I struck them out, and went back

to bed. My greatest trouble was preserving the characteristics of my characters : I found the serious lady, at times, inclined to be funny ; and the gentleman, whose place it was to be perpetually droll, occasionally lapsing into a profound melancholy. I have seen Mr. Ducrow at the circus driving fourteen horses abreast. I have seen one or two unruly beasts throw the whole team out of order. I was like Mr. Ducrow : my characters were like the horses. I began to alter in my appearance. Some of my friends thought I was going into a consumption. I received many pots of jelly and marmalade from unknown hands, and (the recollection makes me sick, even now !) four quarts of cod-liver oil from an aunt in the country, with a strict injunction that I should take half a pint every morning before breakfast ! I could not sleep at night ; I lost my appetite ; my hair turned gray. This state of things could not go on for ever. I must have some professional advice—not medical, but theatrical ; and I resolved at last, although reluctantly, to call and consult a person from whom I had once taken six lessons in elocution. The result of my interview with this gentleman was, that I got the address of an individual who, I was told, could materially assist me “in any walk of literature or the drama.” It was a dirty, greasy card, drawn up as follows :—

MR. GLOWWORM,
AUTHOR, ACTOR, AND POET:
SHORTS' GARDENS, DRURY LANE.
GENTLEMEN'S OWN MATERIALS MADE UP.

ACROSTICS, SONNETS, AND IMPROMPTUS, ON THE SHORTEST
NOTICE, AND MOST REASONABLE TERMS.

I sent a note to Mr. Glowworm, asking him to wait upon me at my rooms at eight o'clock in the evening. At the appointed time he came. He was a short, stout man, about fifty years of age; closely shaven, and blue about the cheeks and chin. He was dressed in a thread-bare black coat and trousers, with a faded purple velvet waistcoat, buttoned up to the neck, round which he wore a black satin stock, rather worn at the edges. His face was coarse, and inclined to be fat; and his mouth was rather drawn down on one side, as if from a habit of making grimaces. This was the strange guide who was to take my trembling hand, and to direct my tottering steps in the intricate, and—by me—untrodden paths of dramatic literature.

“My dear sir,” he began, when we had seated ourselves, “you need feel under no restraint. Everything with me is held in the strictest confidence. Do you require a new work furnished, a rough sketch filled up, or an old work remodelled?”

“I merely wish,” I replied, “to have a little advice and assistance upon a literary matter, that I fear I have entered upon without a thorough knowledge of its technical difficulties.”

“Experience,” he returned, “is only to be gained in time; and you are comparatively young. I remember the period when I used to sit for hours over a sheet of paper, and could not hammer out a line. Now, nothing comes amiss to me.”

“Indeed!” I replied, admiringly; “that must be very gratifying.”

“I don’t care,” he continued, “for the empty gratification of having my name blazoned in magazines and title-pages. I work quietly, like a mole, underground, my province not being so much to originate as to improve. If some old stockbroker, in his Clapton retirement, cannot rest easy until he has delivered himself of a pamphlet on the Bank Charter, the crude production comes to me, and—I prepare it for the press. If a lady with literary aspirations thinks she would like to see herself lying on a drawing-room table as the authoress of ‘Ida, and other Poems,’ a manuscript is forwarded to me, and—I prepare it for the press. If a young gentleman, whose education has been neglected, wishes to appear as a classical scholar, he sends his essay to me, and I fill in quotations from Horace and Juvenal at discretion. If a new panorama is opened, I have something to do with the descriptive lecture. If Mr. Tenwigs wishes to go the round of the ‘Literary Institutions’ with an old comic entertainment, it is

my task to bring it up to the spirit of the present day; and if the same industrious gentleman should purchase a second-hand Orrery at a broker's it is my duty to furnish him with all the latest discoveries in astronomy, that his lecture during Passion Week at one of the theatres may not be marked by any glaring errors in fact, or blemishes in style. So you observe, sir, that my experience is somewhat wide; may I ask in what particular kind of literature I can be of service to you?"

"My production is a farce," I replied; "and, although not altogether unacquainted with the stage, I find a little difficulty with the plot, and I have thought it desirable to seek the advice of an experienced person like yourself."

"Oh! indeed," he rejoined, "a worshipper at the shrine of Thalia! Well, sir, you are quite right; the stage is sadly in want of assistance from literary men; fresh blood, sir, fresh blood is necessary to her very existence. Allow me to run my eye over your manuscript: I soon form a judgment."

I handed him the composition with some degree of nervous timidity; and I waited impatiently for the verdict of a man of such wide experience. I was not long kept in suspense.

"My dear sir," said he, with a glow upon his countenance, "you have *not* mistaken your vocation. During a long and varied career, it has often been my painful duty to check the impulses of a young and ardent nature; to turn a mind from the calm contemplation of the primrose paths of poesy, to the

stern realities of every-day life. But in your case, I can lay my hand upon my heart without hesitation, and say, Go on, sir,—go on in the course that you have adopted: success must attend your efforts.”

I was scarcely prepared for such a gratifying compliment. I felt as if I had been in a dream. The doubts that had beset me in the execution of my work seemed to disappear like the illusions of hypochondria. When I had sufficiently recovered myself, I ventured to draw his attention to one or two manifest omissions in the work.

“Oh, ah! exactly,” he rejoined, turning to the parts indicated,—“mere trifles, sir, mere trifles,—not the result of a lack of genius, but of a comparative unfamiliarity with the mechanical exigencies of the stage.”

“I am very proud to hear you say so,” I replied; “but if you will turn to page 18, I think you will find that the interest sensibly flags at that point.”

“Then it will be necessary,” he replied, “to stimulate the attention of the audience by some striking incident. My dear sir, that you may leave to me; it is peculiarly my province. I shall smash a tray full of crockery at that juncture, an incident that is indispensable to all successful farces—in some cases it must be repeated twice. I shall compel one of the characters to appear in a tattered coat and a battered hat. I shall make the chamber-maid lock somebody in a china closet. I shall——”

“But,” I interrupted, “you will find that my plot will not admit of these incidents.”

“Make yourself perfectly easy upon that score. They *must* be introduced, and you shall in due time admire the art with which I will introduce them. I must revise the names: they are too refined. For instance, ‘Mr. Banbury’ is too respectable and quiet without the ‘tart.’ ‘Mr. Banburytart’ is a farce name, that would carry a piece through without anything else.”

“I am quite content to leave every thing to your judgment,” I answered. “Which theatre do you think the piece is best suited for?”

“That is a question requiring great consideration,” he returned. “There is but one man that could do full justice to your principal character, and he is unfortunately lost to us at present. Do you know Spasms—little Spasms of the Shambles Theatre, Whitechapel?”

“No, I do not.”

“Wonderful comedian, sir, especially in nervous parts; but, as I said before, he is lost to us for a time.”

“Is he ill?” I inquired.

“No,” he replied, “he is in the Queen’s Bench. It will not do to send it to Smugston, because he contracts by the year with an eminent Paris firm, and his actors have no voice in the matter. Millefleur won’t do because he understands French, and does his own translating. If you send it to Spangles, he will write and tell you that he has got a five years’ stock on hand. Toddler might take it, but then he would only use it as a setting for his eternal

comic songs. Little Waddle will not look at it unless it has a part for his wife. Gaggler is the most likely man to take it up, if he has not grown too lazy to learn any new parts. Leave it entirely to me, and I will undertake to see it properly introduced to his manager."

I was, of course, too happy to transfer the business into such competent hands. I paid him a very liberal sum, on account, and shortly afterwards he took his leave.

Mr. Glowworm called in occasionally to report progress, which was satisfactory, and also to draw little sums of money,—which was not quite so satisfactory. His visits became less frequent: they ceased. I waited some weeks, and then I wrote to him. The letter was returned, marked, "Gone away." It now became evident that I must begin to move in the matter myself, and very reluctantly I prepared to do so. My first impulse was to write to the theatre, and then I thought it would be much better to obtain an interview with the manager himself. I found his address at Brompton—I had some slight recollection of his face from having seen him on the stage. I thought my best plan would be to watch him out of his house when he came down to rehearsals in the morning, and introduce the subject carelessly to him in the omnibus. Acting upon this idea, I lounged about the neighbourhood on several occasions without success. At last, one morning about twelve, a staid, business-looking man issued from the house. He hailed an omnibus, and we both

entered it together. He certainly did not bear much resemblance to the manager, but I thought my memory might have deceived me. I tried in every way to engage his attention, but he was so much engrossed with some memoranda in a pocket-book that I could not succeed. He did not stop at the theatre, but went on to the City. I followed him to an office near Lombard Street. I asked a ticket-porter, standing at the door of the house, if he knew the gentleman who had just entered; his answer was that he belonged to the celebrated firm of Overreach and Co., the money-lenders. Many years afterwards I learned that this firm held a mortgage upon the theatre. No doubt the staid gentleman had been up to arrange some business connected with it.

This was a very narrow escape from making a mistake. I went home ruminating upon it, and resolved to go boldly to the theatre that night, and seek an interview with the manager in his room. I found by the bills that he was to perform in the first piece, and I therefore judged that if I reached the theatre about half-past six, I should catch him dressing for his part.

At the time I had settled, I arrived at the stage door. It was situated in a dirty, gloomy back street, and seemed to be the entrance to an old house, whose broken windows were patched with pieces of scenery and theatrical posters. Just inside the door sat a porter in a kind of watch-box. I explained to him that it was absolutely necessary

that I should see the manager without delay, upon business of the highest importance ;—I was surprised that I found determination enough to say this, but I had screwed my nerves up to a certain pitch, and I resolved to carry my point. The porter upon this consulted for some minutes with a woman in the passage, she went up the creaking staircase, stayed some minutes, came down again, and told me she would conduct me to the manager's room. I followed her up a number of very worn and dirty stairs, lighted here and there by a dim jet of gas projecting from the black and crumbling wall. At last we stopped at a half-open door, at which my guide tapped.

“You cannot come in,” exclaimed an excited voice within the room, “I'm in a state of nudity !”

My companion glided away, and I was left alone with the manager. “My name is Fudgeplot,” I exclaimed mildly, still outside the door.

“I am dressing for an arduous part,” returned the manager, still more excited, “I have to be on the stage in ten minutes. If you were Shakespeare himself, sir ! I could not speak to you at this moment !”

“I beg pardon if I have intruded, but——”

“Stay,” rapidly interposed the manager. “What's your business ? Take your place behind the screen. I can give you one minute.”

I took my place as he indicated, behind a screen that stood within the door, hiding the interior of the room. I was thus only separated from the great

manager by this frail partition. A strong-minded, resolute man, under such circumstances, would have compelled the acceptance of any piece upon any terms,—I, on the contrary, was beginning to be painfully sensible that I had chosen an unfortunate time for my visit. “I’ve called,” I meekly replied, “about a farce sent to you on my behalf by Mr. Glowworm?”

“Mr. Glowworm? I don’t know such a person. What title has it?”

“Well, I believe he decided to call it ‘Veal Cutlets,’ because——”

“What name? pronounce slowly and distinctly.”

“‘Veal—Cutlets!’”

“I never received any farce with such a title. I don’t know Mr. Glowworm; I don’t know anything about ‘Veal Cutlets!’”

“But, you don’t mean——”

“Now, sir, I hear that the overture is finished—I have not a minute to spare; will you take a decided answer?”

I could say no more. I slunk from the theatre, and returned to my lodgings in no very cheerful mood. The faithless Glowworm had deceived me.

For many months I remained in ignorance of the fate of my farce. At length circumstances came to my knowledge that led me to believe that it had been performed at one of the obscure minor theatres—probably at the “Shambles Theatre, White-chapel,” with “little Spasms” fresh from the Bench in the principal part, and before an audience of

butchers, drunken sailors, and Jew clothesmen ! I received the following notice from the Insolvent Court :—

“ Whereas the Petition and Schedule of Octavius Glowworm, formerly of 8, Shorts’ Gardens, Drury Lane, Author and Literary Adviser, Secretary and Managing Director of the London Melo-Dramatic Company (Limited) ; then of 19, Broker’s Alley, Gray’s-Inn Lane, Proprietor of the Samaritan Loan and Discount Office ; then of 10, Crane Square, Tower Hill, first engaged in promoting, and afterwards as Chairman of the Isle of Dogs Land and Building Association ; then of 81, St. Spankus Terrace, New Road, trading under the title of Glowworm & Co., as proprietors of the Anti-Blackbeetle Syrup, and Auditor of the Society for the Extirpation of all kinds of Vermin ; then of the Shambls Theatre, Whitechapel, lessee and actor ; then of Brickfield Lodge, Holloway ; then of Carcass Square, Bayswater ; and now of Cabbage Court, Covent Garden, Characteristic Vocalist at the Common Sewers Concert Room, and during all the time occasionally writing and revising various literary works, and, for a short time, while at Brickfield Lodge, delivering lectures upon the Currency, at the Polyclaptrap Institution, London ;

“ An Insolvent Debtor ; have been filed in the Court, etc., and any Creditor may appear,” etc.

As I had not been honoured with a call before the curtain, I did not care to appear before the Commissioner. For any opposition of mine Octavius

Glowworm got through the Court, although he had had the effrontery to insert my name in his schedule as a creditor for fifteen pounds, cash lent, and ten pounds for the purchase money of an incomplete farce, entitled "Veal Cutlets!"*

* Reprinted from the *Train Magazine*.

A COUNTERFEIT PRESENTMENT.

My name is not unknown to the British public. When I mention that I am the author of those powerful letters which appear occasionally under the signature of Hydrophobius, I need scarcely add that I am the celebrated Sweetwort. While writing those letters I was a happy man. My privacy was as strictly preserved as that of Junius, and probably for the same reason, because my name would then have added nothing to the force of my fulminations. In a moment of weakness I allowed the veil to be torn asunder. My letters were collected and published; and, not content with that, to show my versatility, I gave to the world a collection of poetry, bearing my signature at full length, under the title of *The Rhododendron*, and other poems. For about three months after the publication of these two volumes, I had the exciting pleasure of seeing myself torn to pieces by my enemies in the daily and weekly critical organs; and the stupefying agony of seeing myself defended by my friends in the same channels of public instruction. The result of this contest was, that I became a literary lion. No gathering of wits was considered perfect without me. My time, during the week, was divided between dinner parties, evening parties, and con-

versazioni. Occasionally, as I passed along the streets, I had the satisfaction of seeing men who were walking together, turn round as I went by, and hearing them say to each other hastily : “ There he is ! That’s Sweetwort !—Hydrophobius, you know ! ”

I had lived in this happy state for about six months, when it was suddenly found by photographic artists that a public demand existed for my portrait. I might have anticipated this natural result of my exalted position, but I had purposely closed my eyes to it for certain reasons of a physical nature.

My face and head are of that peculiar character, that, under no possible combination of lights and attitude could they be agreeable in a photographic portrait, or give any correct idea of the original. This, however, availed nothing to stem the tide of persecution, which set in, gently at first, but gradually increased in power, until it broke down every barrier which the forms and decencies of society had raised before it.

The attack was commenced with letters, which came one and two a-day, three and four, ten, a dozen, even twenty at last, from photographic artists, soliciting the favour of a sitting. Some came with bare requests ; others backed by the recommendations of acquaintances, to whom they were allowed to refer ; others giving a list of what they had already done in the wide field of literary and artistic portraits. All these letters required to be

answered according to the rules of business and politeness.

Not always, however, was the request conveyed in writing ; frequently it gave rise to personal visits of gentlemanly-looking men, who, if I was not at home, would not leave their cards, saying it was no matter, and they would call again. Some, by great tact and industry, obtained an interview, and were very difficult to bow out, they were so mild and persuasive. A few of the more energetic, when they called, were thoroughly prepared to take advantage, if I happened to be in one of my moments of weakness. Boys were waiting with the necessary apparatus round the corner ; and sometimes the shadow of the abominable instrument was cast by the sunlight across my study blinds, as I was endeavouring with all the powers at my command to get rid of its owner. I was as much attacked by the implements of photographic art, as ever an unpopular Irish landlord was by the blunderbusses of insolvent tenants. My excited imagination saw the detestable lens pointed at me in the street, levelled at my dressing-room curtain as I went through the task of shaving ; lurking for me in by-lanes, and under cover of the trees in the open meadows ; stationed even in the very centre of the green-coated German band who played their operatic selection before my breakfast-room window.

The real or presumed ties of family and kindred were raked up to assist in my persecution.

A full-bearded gentleman of Venetian aspect

waited upon me early one morning, with a letter from an agriculturist stationed in one of the most inaccessible parts of Wales, begging to introduce the bearer to my notice, he being the grandson of some old lady that I was supposed to remember, who was the niece of my mother's aunt by my mother's marriage with her first husband before she became the wife of my late father. I read the letter, and exhibited a decent degree of cordiality to my visitor. I even invited him to dinner, when, to my horror, he slowly explained, over the wine, the object of his visit—the old story—my portrait. But he did not get it. Oh no!

On another occasion, by the carelessness and ignorance of a new servant, a shabby sheriff's-officer-looking man was admitted into my study, where he immediately took a seat, placing a greasy hat upon the floor, containing a red cotton pocket-handkerchief. I awaited his pleasure, not being aware that any writs were out against me, or that a distress was likely to be put in for rent. He was not long in explaining his business.

“Of course,” he began, “as I says to my gov’ner, a gent didn’t ought to have his val’able time took up without gettin’ suffin for it.”

“Sir!” I said, in astonishment.

“Well,” he continued drowsily, without noticing my remark, “a gent’s pictur’ fetches money—consekently it’s worth money—that’s about the size of it, I think!”

I gave him no reply, being too much engaged

in thinking of the uncharitableness of the world, which was probably attributing my coyness to interested motives. The photographic professors perhaps thought that the proper price for my portrait had not yet been offered to me, and had sent this agreeable agent to negotiate the purchase.

"Come," he added, in what was intended to be a wheedling tone, "it's soon over, you know; only like havin' a tooth out, after all. If a gen'elman's a gen'elman, my gov'ner 'll do the thing that's right."

Whether this man was simply drunk—a paid agent, or a self-constituted agent, I did not stay to ascertain. At the close of the last speech I had him moved bodily out of the house, and I was annoyed with no more personal applications for the space of three weeks.

For the short period of three weeks I was entirely undisturbed, and began to comfort myself with the delightful belief that the portrait mania, as far as I was concerned, had at length worked itself out by sheer exhaustion, and died quietly away. I was the victim of a miserable self-deception. The calm was only the forerunner of the tempest.

Entering my study, one morning, a little earlier than usual, I found it, to my astonishment, in the possession of a tall, stout, determined-looking man, who returned my inquiring glance with a steady eye, that seemed prepared for everything. A mysterious feeling came over me, as I gazed with a

kind of fascination upon the stranger, that at last I had found my master. He had obtained admission, in defiance of my strict instructions, by stepping over the pail and the housemaid, as she was cleaning the steps in the morning. Remonstrance, with such a man, I seemed to feel was useless, and I allowed him to state his business at once, without interruption, conscious that no time would be lost.

"Now, sir," he said loudly, in the tone of a policeman who had just caught a notorious criminal, "you are aware that for some time, a growing demand has existed for your portrait?"

I assented, silently.

"You are aware," he continued, calmly, but forcibly, "that, when a demand reaches a certain height, it must be supplied?"

I again assented with a feeble nod.

"Good. Look here."

He drew a picture from his capacious coat-pocket. He placed it in my hand. I examined it carefully. It was a marvellous production of photographic skill—a beetle-browed man, with the Sunday complexion of a master chimney-sweep, the lineaments of a churchwarden mixed with those of the professional burglar, but whether the churchwarden turned burglar or the burglar turned churchwarden, it was impossible to determine.

"Know that person?" asked my visitor.

I replied that I did not.

"Bill Tippetts—the Lambeth Phenomenon."

"Of the prize-ring?"

“Of the prize-ring.”

I returned the portrait of Bill Tippetts.

“Now,” continued my visitor, “I’m a practical man. I’ve got an order for two thousand copies of your portrait, for home consumption, and fifteen hundred for exportation. I don’t want to do anything offensive ; but, knowing your objection to sit for a photograph, I have been compelled to look amongst my stock for something like you, and I can find nothing so near the mark as Bill Tippetts.”

A cold perspiration came over me : the practical man had got me in his power.

“This order for two thousand copies of your likeness for home consumption, and fifteen hundred for exportation,” he resumed, “must be executed within ten days, and I can only give you till ten o’clock to-morrow morning to decide. At that hour I must know whether it is to be Bill Tippetts, or Mr. Edgar Sweetwort. Good morning.”

Long before the appointed hour, I was sitting helplessly, under a broiling sun, in a glass cage upon the tiles of an elevated house near the Haymarket, W., composing my countenance according to the imperious instructions of the relentless photographer.

OUR MR. DOVE.

MR. LILYSEED was a decidedly clever man. He had tried many professions and occupations about the provinces, and had found them all too slow as roads to wealth. His last and present occupation was that of a London linendraper.

Now a London linendraper may be, and often is, a very dull and respectable man, but Mr. Lilyseed was far too clever to be so tamely respectable. Go-ahead was his creed, and Push-on was his watch-word; and this was the reason why he was largely trusted and respected. His orders were never neglected in Cannon Street or Manchester, and his bills were considered as good as bank-notes, after deducting a slight discount for the time during which they were running.

The main secret, however, of Mr. Lilyseed's popularity in the markets, was the excellent faith that he had always kept with his creditors. He had always paid his way. If anybody had suffered, his creditors were not the persons.

Mr. Lilyseed had, in some respects, been a singularly unfortunate man; a man who seemed doomed to be visited by the fearful calamity of fire. The electric fluid (as it is popularly called) had always spared his stock-in-trade and household

gods, but not so the devouring element. The devouring element was exceedingly hard upon poor Mr. Lilyseed, or rather it would have been hard upon him, if he had not been excessively clever, prudent, and far-seeing. As it was, the devouring element was left to wreak its unruly vengeance upon a variety of fire-offices in which Mr. Lilyseed was fully insured, and especially upon the great office of the Happy-go-Lucky Insurance Company. The Happy-go-Lucky Insurance Company had plenty of money, a jolly board of directors, and an historical name and reputation, and they paid every demand that was made upon them with the least possible delay, and without any murmurs. The smaller offices sometimes showed a disposition to be waspish, but as their losses were reinsured in the Happy-go-Lucky Office, it was not their place to stand out in opposition to their leader.

It was a somewhat peculiar thing, too, when you came to think of it, that Mr. Lilyseed should have been so singularly afflicted. He called it "visited," when he was in a serious mood; but, call it by any name, and the fact was the same. A gas explosion at Birmingham; a total burn-out at Norwich; another gas explosion at Liverpool; and a fearful conflagration at his shop and dwelling-house in London, were a very remarkable series of accidents, to say the least of them. Mr. Lilyseed and his family were always saved—providentially saved—but the destruction of property was always enormous. Mr. Lilyseed had, once or twice,

appeared with a bruise, a scorch, a sprained joint, or a head of hair singed, as if it had been prepared by a barber; and, on one occasion, he was nearly sacrificed to the fury of the devouring element; but not quite—in fact, very far from quite. The fires always occurred at a season of the year when the old stock was supposed to be getting dusty, the patterns stale, and the new stock had just come in. The Happy-go-Lucky Insurance Company, however, took no notice of this; and after the last accident, they built a new block of premises for the enterprising but unfortunate linendraper. The lofty stone-fronted shop formed a very different receptacle for merchandise to the dingy, old, smoky-bricked buildings on either side of it.

This last act of liberality on the part of the Happy-go-lucky Office did not seem to please Mr. Lilyseed like the cash-payment form of settlement that had been usually adopted. The expenditure of the money was thereby largely taken out of his hands, and he saw the gradual erection of a new castle and trading establishment, which left him with a very slender balance at his banker's. True, he had the usual payment for the usual stock that had been consumed as usual; and the lease of the new premises, by the rebuilding and improvements, was thereby rendered so much more valuable as a security for raising money. This was the immense advantage that Mr. Lilyseed derived from his last and fourth calamity by fire; and yet he was not satisfied!

Mr. Lilyseed's commercial operations had always been upon an ascending scale ; that is to say, when he paid a manufacturer's bill of two hundred pounds, he bought four hundred pounds' worth more goods from the same person ; and when, in other instances, he cleared off four hundred pounds sterling of debt, he accompanied it by taking eight hundred pounds sterling of credit. This kept his warehouse well stocked with those materials of trade, which, by a little dexterous, though, perhaps, illegitimate manipulation, became the stepping-stone to available cash, that, in its turn, was useful in consolidating the structure of Mr. Lilyseed's credit.

Mr. Lilyseed was careful to preserve all the outward and visible signs, the forms, and the decencies, or indecencies, of trade. He advertised ; he puffed, or was puffed ; he connected himself with a political movement and a social movement ; he registered a particular article of clothing with a very ugly, eccentric shape, and a more ugly, eccentric Greek title ; he did everything, in fact, that was usual or necessary in his trade and position, except to make the ordinary alarming sacrifices. For some reason, these were never required in Mr. Lilyseed's establishment. The stock was always pushed off, or consumed (by fire) without them.

Mr. Lilyseed was worthy of a more extended sphere of action. His financial abilities had never been brought into contact with the bill of exchange, or there is nothing that might not have been ex-

pected as the result. His business was nothing if not a ready-money business, and it gave no opportunities or excuse for drawing bills for goods that had really been sold, or for imaginary transactions that had never been entered into. When Mr. Lilyseed accepted a bill that was drawn by one of his manufacturers, he always did so with a sigh, as he saw glimpses of a financial paradise stretching before him, into which he was firmly forbidden, for the present, to enter.

A person of Mr. Lilyseed's ingenuity and resources was not, of course, to be left without a substitute for the accommodating and accommodation bill of exchange, although the substitute was one of a very clumsy, inferior, and inelastic nature.

Mr. Lilyseed had early placed himself in the hands of the auctioneers, and had found them a very useful and moneyed body of gentlemen. As gay young men about town are often found to be in the hands of the Jews, and yet seem to lead a very agreeable life, notwithstanding, so staid old shopkeepers about London, are often in the hands of the auctioneers, and also lead a very agreeable life, notwithstanding.

A far less clever man than Mr. Lilyseed might have found an auctioneer prepared and willing to advance two-thirds of the cost-price value of goods intended for sale, when every newspaper is full of advertisements from such convenient business gentlemen. A far less cautious man than Mr. Lilyseed might have had no fear in sending a few waggon-

loads of silks and ribbons to such a well-backed capitalist, where as much individual secrecy of operation, with as much promptitude of payment, was insured, as if the transaction had been one where stolen property was passing between a thief and a receiver. In this case, although caution and secrecy were observed, there was no pressure of any criminal law and its administration which rendered this absolutely necessary. The parties to the operation, if any notice had been taken of it, were, on the one hand, an established tradesman of name and repute, who was clearing out old goods to make room for new ones; and, on the other hand, an equally established auctioneer, of equal name and repute, who was well supported by a spotless and powerful banking-house, and who was receiving and dealing with these goods as per instructions delivered. It is true that after the sale is concluded, and the advance of two-thirds cost value with interest is deducted, together with certain sale-room charges and commission, there will be no balance worth mentioning to hand over to the seller of the property. This will involve a considerable loss that must fall upon somebody's shoulders, and not, perhaps, upon the shoulders of the tradesman who has secured and disposed of the money paid in advance; but this is no business of any impertinent magistrates, any prying police-officers, or any troublesome policeman.

If, in the fulness of time, and the rottenness of a trading smash, such an habitual indulgence in

secret sale-room dissipation is found to lead to something very like a fraudulent bankruptcy, there are the proper tribunals appointed to deal with this difficulty, and the fearful penalty of a three months' suspension of certificate.

This was the ever ready means of converting heavy stock-in-trade into portable and circulating cash, of which Mr. Lilyseed had very frequently availed himself. He had not been under the same necessity to preserve an impenetrable secrecy, which weighs upon most traders who drink at the same fountain. The money he had received from these sales had been faithfully applied to his creditors, as far as it would go, and the balances which it left against him were of little importance in the case of so good a customer. The money he had received from the Happy-go-Lucky Fire Insurance Company after the devouring element had feasted upon its prey, was thus left securely in his possession, as a basis for future operations. This was no inconsiderable sum, for the account of losses that he rendered exhibited the utmost amount of property destroyed at the utmost of prime cost valuation. He always, somehow or other, forgot to mention the waggon-loads of goods that had been disposed of at the sale-rooms, and no one ever stepped forward to jog his memory. The Happy-go-Lucky Insurance Company never expressed any doubts, or raised any difficulty about paying Mr. Lilyseed's alarming claim, or if they did, there was no one to carry them beyond the closed doors of the board-room. The system

they worked upon was supposed to produce ultimate profit out of present losses ; and in a trading association which spent an enormous sum in advertising every year, it was, perhaps, wisely thought that the prompt discharge of large claims was the best advertisement to increase an already gigantic business. A favourable feature in Lilyseed's case was the fact that his account-books were never destroyed nor even mutilated. The provincial gas explosions and fires, as well as the metropolitan burn-out, had all occurred at night, and at an hour when the books and papers were all secured in an invulnerable iron cupboard. This may have had its desired effect upon the minds of the insurance managers ; in fact, it must have had an influence.

If Mr. Lilyseed was dissatisfied with the manner in which the Happy-go-Lucky Company had settled his last claim, it was not long before he had substantial reason to be far more dissatisfied. When his new shop was completed, and stocked more closely with valuable goods than it had ever been before, he had the unexpected mortification of having his insurance rejected. The Happy-go-Lucky Company had become prudent at last, and while they made no remark about past calamities, they steadily refused to receive any present or future premiums from Mr. Lilyseed. The game was a losing one, regarded from every point of view ; and years after the clerks in the office had made up their minds upon this point, the board of directors had become dimly aware of it. Mr. Lilyseed was politely advised

to try a few other large offices in the same line of business ; but he was too clever and complete a tradesmen to give himself any such unnecessary trouble. He knew it would be fruitless, and he kept his money. It is strange that from that moment he was never troubled with the devouring element.

A few months passed in what may be barely called a legitimate trade, brought on another attack of Mr. Lilyseed's speculative energy. It wanted but a few weeks to the fourth day of a certain January on which most of those manufacturers' bills would have to be paid, that had been drawn for the new stock-in-trade of the clever and complete tradesman. Mr. Lilyseed found himself very rapidly getting into a corner. It was not a corner in which he suffered from the scarcity of money, but a corner in which he had plenty of that coveted article, and wished to keep it. The cloven hoof began to be a little—just a little—apparent in Mr. Lilyseed's little counting-house. He saw no chance of preying any longer upon the Happy-go-Lucky, or any similar company, and he began to turn his own attention towards his creditors.

Mr. Lilyseed, for once, took a very unusual step with him—he consulted his solicitor, Mr. Darky. Mr. Darky was not a professional gentleman of any very great moral principle, but he was thoroughly grounded in the etiquette and routine of his business.

“My dear sir,” he said to Mr. Lilyseed, “you must not come to me at this stage of your career,

and tell me you're in difficulties. I mustn't hear it; I can't hear it; I don't hear it. You are not in difficulties; you are perfectly solvent; but you have a large creditor, a cash creditor, who is pressing you for a considerable sum, and you give him substantial security for his claim."

"But I have no such cred——," Mr. Lilyseed was observing, when Mr. Darky abruptly stopped him. The clever and complete tradesman was only clever and complete in his own peculiar way—the way of making money out of the devouring element. In the office of Mr. Darky he was again a child.

"That creditor will press you, if I understand you," returned Mr. Darky, "in the course of the afternoon. You had better see me again upon the matter, the first thing in the morning. Good day."

Mr. Darky bowed Mr. Lilyseed out with a profusion of nods, and winks, and signs, until the clever and complete tradesmen began to see the course it was intended he should adopt. A very little walking brought him back to his counting-house, and a good deal of reflection made him summon Mr. Dove, "Our Mr. Dove," as he was called, his leading shopman, to his presence.

There were several reasons why Our Mr. Dove was sent for. In the first place, he was no relation of Mr. Lilyseed; in the next, he was an extremely mild, feeble, and manageable young man; and, in the next place, Mr. Lilyseed was much pressed to find a reliable persecuting cash creditor. Mr. Dove was sounded in the counting-house, was invited to

supper, and was spoken to over some midnight pipes and tobacco, and midnight whisky-and-water. Mr. Lilyseed consumed the tobacco and whisky; Mr. Dove was not in the habit of smoking, and preferred a very weak and sweet mixture of wine-and-water.

“If I can do anything to serve you, sir,” said Our Mr. Dove, in a timid and devoted manner, “you may command me thoroughly. I don’t understand these things so well as I ought, because they belong to the counting-house, which is not my department; but I suppose I may rely upon Mr. Darky, your solicitor, to set me right?”

“Undoubtedly,” returned Mr. Lilyseed, in a satisfied and pompous tone (he was not only Mr. Dove’s master, but he was old enough to be Mr. Dove’s father). “Undoubtedly. Have you got a solicitor?”

“Oh no,” replied Mr. Dove, very modestly, “I never had any occasion for one.”

“I thought not,” said Mr. Lilyseed, “and I have provided accordingly. If you will step in, the first thing in the morning, to a Mr. Dusky, a professional gentleman, whose place of business is only four doors from Mr. Darky’s, at No. 15 in the same row, you can instruct him to sue me for five thousand pounds, debt and interest, and you will find him thoroughly prepared to act upon your instructions.”

The next day Our Mr. Dove instructed Mr. Dusky, who returned more instruction than he received. A writ was issued in the case of Dove versus Lilyseed. A deed of assignment, a bill of sale, was proposed by Mr. Darky, acting for Mr. Lily-

seed, to stop the action. The action was stopped by Mr. Dusky, acting for Mr. Dove, in consideration of Mr. Lilyseed executing this deed, conveying six thousand five hundred pounds in stock and book debts, and paying five hundred pounds in cash to Mr. Dove, within four-and-twenty hours. The margin of two thousand pounds, excess, was left to cover depreciation. An appointment was made to do this, at Mr. Lilyseed's establishment, before half this time had expired. Mr. Lilyseed had obtained the five hundred pounds, with great difficulty, from a client of Mr. Darky's, a retiring capitalist, who advanced upon a substantial deposit of stock to twice the amount. This capitalist did not wish his name to appear, and the whole business was, therefore, transacted through Mr. Darky.

At eleven o'clock one morning, the two solicitors, Mr. Dusky and Mr. Darky, attended in Mr. Lilyseed's sitting-room to patch up the action of Dove versus Lilyseed. The plaintiff and defendant, of course, were both present.

"You are willing," said Mr. Dusky, speaking to his client, Mr. Dove, "to accept the bill of sale for six thousand five hundred pounds in stock-in-trade (according to the inventory attached), and a cash payment of five hundred pounds, as a satisfaction of your claim against Mr. Lilyseed?"

"Well," replied Our Mr. Dove, who acted his part to perfection, "I really know so little of these matters, that I must leave myself entirely in your hands."

“Mr. Darky,” said Mr. Dusky, addressing his fellow-solicitor, “will you instruct your client, Mr. Lilyseed, to execute the deed?”

Mr. Darky did as he was requested, and the bill of sale, in favour of Mr. Dove, after a little whispering, a little mumbling, a little pointing, a sound of quill pens scratching upon parchment, and much placing of forefingers upon small red wafers, was duly signed, sealed, and delivered.

A promissory note for five thousand pounds, payable on demand, and bearing Mr. Lilyseed’s signature in favour of Mr. Dove, was handed over to the latter gentleman, that he might sign a memorandum and receipt on its back, referring to the deed and the sum of five hundred pounds which was at that moment to be paid.

“Where do I put my name?” asked the mild and feeble Mr. Dove, as he took a very copious dip of ink.

“Immediately under the memorandum,” exclaimed the two solicitors, almost simultaneously.

“Here?” again asked Mr. Dove, putting his tongue out of the side of his mouth, like a school-boy over a writing lesson.

“No, there,” observed the solicitors, pettishly, almost guiding his hand to the place, and looking as if they pitied his clumsiness.

“Had I better sign it in full?” asked Mr. Dove.

“As you’re called in the deed,” they said, pushing that document towards him. “John Henry Dove. The matter’s very simple.”

"I think I ought to count the money—the five hundred pounds?" said Mr. Dove, still hesitating.

"It's all right, and in my possession," returned Mr. Dusky, peremptorily.

"I ought to count it," persisted Mr. Dove; "we always do so down in the shop."

The two solicitors looked at Mr. Lilyseed.

"Let him count it," said Mr. Lilyseed; "it's only five notes of a hundred each."

The money was handed over to Our Mr. Dove, who seemed to be getting very nervous. He counted it tremulously, and then signed the back of the promissory note in a hurried style of handwriting. After he had done this, he crumpled up the bank-notes and the promissory note, and put them in his trousers pocket, while he rolled up the bill of sale, and grasped it like a stick.

"What are you doing?" shouted Mr. Lilyseed and the two solicitors.

"I don't know, I'm sure," returned Mr. Dove, exhibiting a tendency to collapse; "I hope I haven't got into trouble. I ought to have consulted my mother."

"Don't be a fool," said Mr. Lilyseed, authoritatively; "give the deed, the money, and the promissory note to Mr. Dusky, and go down to business."

"Oh, I can't do that, sir, to-day; indeed I can't," replied Our Mr. Dove, excitedly. "I feel quite ill. I must take a turn round the houses, or I won't answer for the consequences."

Mr. Dove was evidently very much worked upon

by the occurrence of the morning, and every attempt to deal with him rationally, either on the part of Mr. Lilyseed or the two solicitors, was utterly hopeless. He was left, at last, in the hands of his employer, simply because no other practicable course presented itself. He persisted in retaining the money and papers; and, what was his in theory, became his in practice.

During the few weeks left to Mr. Lilyseed to prepare the decks for his intended insolvency, the relations of master and servant between him and his head shopman were not disturbed. Mr. Dove attended to his duties the same as usual, while Mr. Lilyseed, as a measure of security, instructed and paid another young man in the establishment to watch him closely, for fear he should dissipate or run away with the five hundred pounds. Mr. Dove, to his credit be it said, showed not the slightest disposition to behave in such an ungrateful manner. He was soft and timid, but he was not dishonest.

The fourth of that particular January arrived at last, and melted very quickly into the fifth. Every bill that bore Mr. Lilyseed's name was sent back unpaid from his banker's, for the very sufficient reason that there was no money lodged to discharge them with. Towards evening a number of London creditors arrived at Mr. Lilyseed's establishment with consternation in their faces. The next day and the next brought up the provincial and principal creditors, who were equally alarmed at the prospect of heavy bad debts.

They had always been remarkably placid and ready to renew their confidence in Mr. Lilyseed when it was the Happy-go-Lucky Insurance Office that was made to suffer. Any suspicions they may have had about sharp dealing on the part of their customer never seemed to shake their faith, for were they not always paid with tolerable regularity, and did not the destructive ravages of the devouring element always produce a fresh demand for merchandise? Now it had come to their turn to lose a stake, they did not seem to relish it.

Mr. Lilyseed was not to be seen—he was too unwell to meet his trading connections—and Mr. Dove was put forward to answer all necessary questions. Mr. Lilyseed's affairs were in the hands of his solicitor, Mr. Darky, and Messrs. Nought and Carryone, the distinguished accountants, had received instructions to prepare a balance-sheet.

This never-varying answer, while it damped the spirits, served to satisfy the inquiries of the larger creditors, but not of the small ones, especially of one of the small ones. Small creditors are always inclined to shy in harness, and so was this one. The withdrawal of Mr. Lilyseed was an act of bankruptcy, according to law, and this particular small creditor availed himself of the Act of Parliament. Without pausing to consider whether he was not playing into the hands of his debtor by forcing him before the humane and lenient tribunal of Bankruptcy, and, much to the disgust of the large credit-

ors, he obtained sufficient co-operation amongst claimants of his own class to carry the point on which he had determined. Before a week had passed, the following notice appeared in the Gazette :—

“LILYSEED, ABRAHAM, Downy Road, linendraper, January 19th, at half-past twelve, and March 6th, at eleven, at the Bankruptcy Court; solicitor, Mr. Darky, Burglarsbury; official assignee, Mr. Loteus, Sackinghall Street.”

The balance-sheet that Messrs. Nought and Carryone prepared was a masterpiece of figurative art. The materials, it is true, had been supplied by Mr. Lilyseed, or rather Mr. Lilyseed's well-preserved books; but what skill they had shown in grouping these materials! The liberal fee that was paid to them over and above the court allowance, was money well laid out to produce a desired result.

Everything was fully accounted for. Mr. Lilyseed had been more unfortunate than anybody supposed. In addition to what he had suffered from the devouring element, he had been largely robbed for years by dishonest servants, without being able to make out a case for prosecution; he had been forged upon, to a large extent, by a heartless nephew, who had fled to the Isle of Thanet, where he was lost in a tornado; and he had had to pay a mass of debts contracted without his knowledge by the extravagant woman whom it was his misfortune to call his wife. His family had suffered much from sickness and feebleness of constitution, and he had

often had to pay five hundred pounds a year for change of air and medical expenses. A number of bad debts had been forced upon him by the influence of people amongst whom, and by whom, he lived ; and he had lost four hundred and fifty pounds at one blow, through accepting an accommodation bill for a man who had saved him from a watery grave when he was quite a boy. The five thousand pounds he had borrowed to extend his business from Mr. Dove (a gentleman who acted as his head manager, but who was connected with some distinguished Irish capitalists) had thus been eaten away with other property. At the hour when he thought he was, and certainly ought to have been, a substantial tradesman, he awoke to find himself a bankrupt and a beggar. His solicitor also wished to mention (though, of course, it would have no influence with the court) that the unfortunate bankrupt was subject to fits, brought on, no doubt, by the shock of so many fires.

The commissioner, after a little confidential communication with the official assignee, declined to pay much attention to the feeble opposition of certain creditors. He found that all the expenses of the court were secured by the property which the bankrupt had given up (according to the official assignee's report), and that there was a prospect of an early dividend of at least a shilling in the pound. He was obliged to rebuke the bankrupt for accepting an accommodation bill, and also for giving a bill of sale to Mr. Dove so short a period before his

bankruptcy ; but, having done this in a severe and fatherly manner, he thought the justice of the case was satisfied by granting Mr. Lilyseed an immediate third-class certificate.

Mr. Lilyseed returned to his establishment, hopeful and triumphant, with this new license to trade in his pocket, and the faithful Mr. Dove was there to receive him. He looked round upon his six thousand five hundred pounds' worth of stock, that had been so cleverly secured from his creditors, and he looked forward to the five hundred pounds and more, in cash, and in Mr. Dove's tenacious keeping.

"We must have the place painted up," said Mr. Lilyseed, addressing Mr. Dove, and at once assuming the position of a master ; "and I don't like that slovenly arrangement of stock in the windows."

"While I congratulate you upon your success before the court, sir," returned Mr. Dove, firmly, "I am afraid that our connection must cease from this moment."

"What !" exclaimed the clever and complete tradesman, "you don't mean to say you want to leave me ? I was thinking of a junior partnership for you."

"I'm much obliged to you, sir, I'm sure," said Mr. Dove, "but I must decline to accept it."

"Well," returned Mr. Lilyseed, resignedly, "you'll credit me with having made the offer. Have you got those bank-notes and documents by you ?"

"I have the documents," replied Mr. Dove, calmly, "but I have disposed of the money."

“Eh—what?” exclaimed Mr. Lilyseed, in astonishment.

“I’ve bought back the lease of these premises, which you had mortgaged up to the neck with Mr. Darky’s invisible capitalist client, and I’ve taken the liberty of putting my own name over the doorway.”

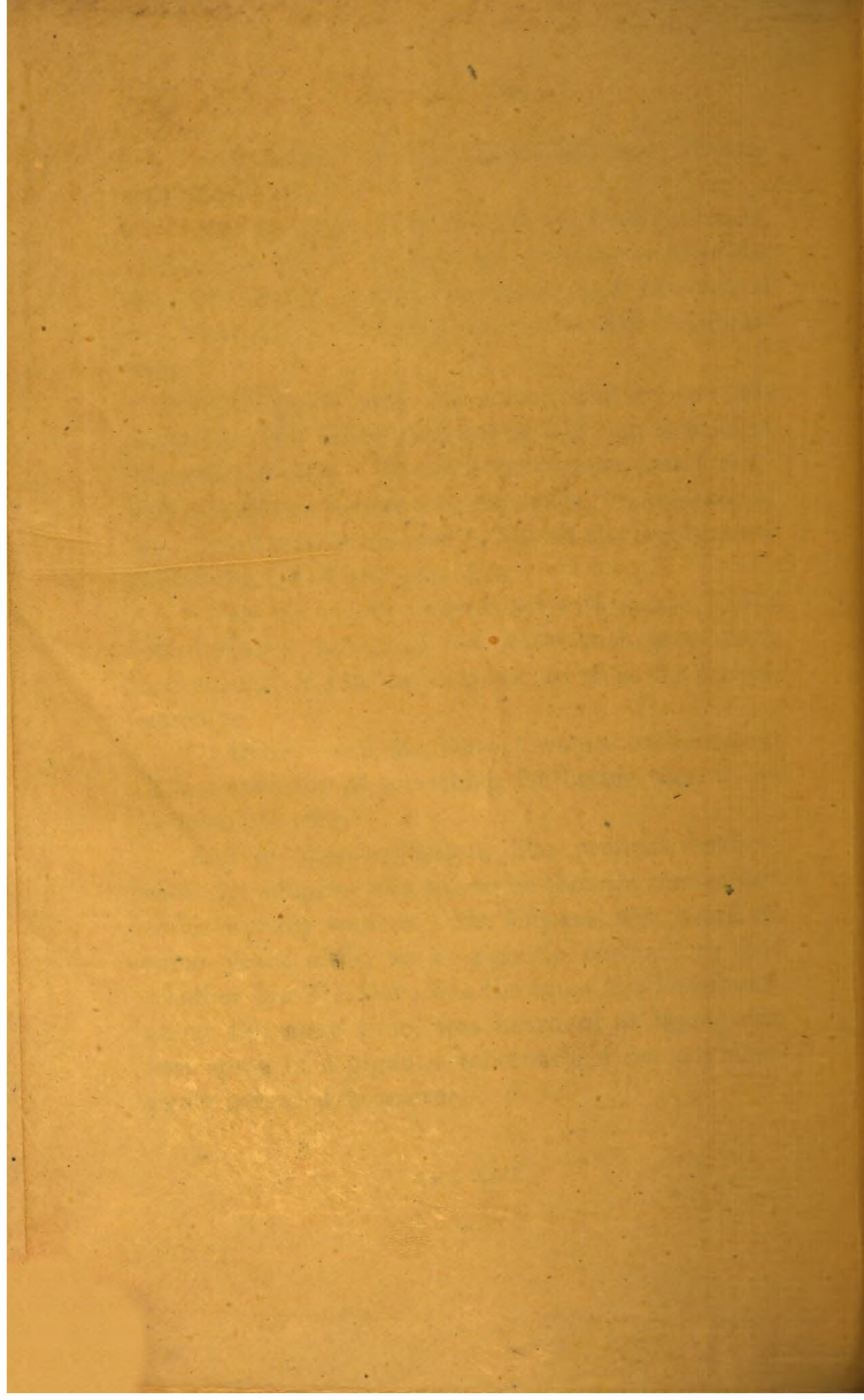
Mr. Lilyseed was not a fool, and he saw his position. Mr. Dove was not a fool, but a wolf in sheep’s clothing. The first gentleman found himself completely turned into the street, for the second gentleman was determined to use all the legal power which the bill of sale gave him.

“I am not wholly unprovided with means,” said Mr. Lilyseed, accepting his defeat with great self-command, “if you are disposed to treat for a partnership.”

“I think,” said Mr. Dove, “we are better apart. You are worthy of something far better than I am prepared to offer.”

And so they separated, like prudent traders, each one adopting the course he thought best suited to his worldly welfare. Mr. Lilyseed was heard of, some years after, as a gigantic contractor; but whether Our Mr. Dove was the same Mr. Dove who, about the same time, was heard of as laying the first stone of a gigantic tabernacle, I am not positively prepared to answer.

THE END.



Hollingshead, John

Works

Bd.: 3

London 1861

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